VALLEY VOICE

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County Targets Landlords for Illegal Pot Grows

Catherine Doe

An illegal pot grow by a tenant at landlord Monique Yang's property in Porterville. Photo courtesy County of Tulare.

Tulare County Supervisors came out with swords drawn during their May 13th meeting. At issue was the imposition of a fine on a Porterville landlord, Monique Yang, for 150 pot plants cultivated on her property by her tenants last September.

On September 10, 2013, Yang received a "10-day notice to abate ordinance code violations" from the Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA). The code violations were, "Construction of a fence over six feet tall, Medical Marijuana cultivation in an unenclosed facility and Medical Marijuana cultivation in the R-1 Zone." (R-1 is residential and medical marijuana can only be grown in property zoned commercial.)

The letter also informed Yang that she had ten days to bring her property into compliance with Tulare County's code. But within 24 hours, the county deemed the site as an "imminent threat." The RMA went to the property and eradicated the plants and then levied a $1724.91 fine on Yang for the clean-up and the cost of issuing the warrant. The site was considered an imminent threat because of the amount of marijuana and the fact that the tenant had started drying the plants, preparing them for consumption.

No attempt was made to collect the fine from those responsible for planting the marijuana. Landlords are expected to recover their costs themselves by taking the tenants to court if need be. Yang appealed the RMA's fine out of principle because she felt that the county was punishing innocent landlords. She based her case on the fact she was not responsible for the pot garden, wasn't aware of its existence, and when she was informed of it she was not given her ten days to rectify the situation. Also, a point of contention

MARIJUANA continued on **11 »**

Attending a recent CCHSRA event are (l-r): Jerry Fagundes, Aaron Fukuda and Randy Aaroniza. Photo courtesy Kings County Farm Bureau.

HSRA Board Approves Alignment of High-Speed Rail Section, CCHSRA Considers Legal Action

Compiled by Steve Pastis

On May 7, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Board of Directors certified the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the Fresno-to-Bakersfield project section of the high-speed rail program, and approved a rail alignment within the Fresno-to-Bakersfield project section.

The action allows the Authority to take additional steps toward continuing major work on the project south from Fresno. This also approves the preferred alignment from the southern edge of the previously approved Fresno Mariposa Street station to the 7th Standard Road northwest of Bakersfield.

"This document represents a culmination of the work done by the Authority to identify a preferred alignment for the project that is consistent with the parameters of Proposition 1A requirements, and extensive input and feedback from members of the community, local and elected officials, a variety of stakeholders and our state and federal partners," said Authority Board Chair Dan Richards. "I know that I have personally, along with my colleagues on the board and Authority staff, spoken with hundreds of people that live and work within this project section. As this process moves forward, we are all committed to and will continue to work with property owners and businesses to ensure that impacts from the high-speed rail project are mitigated and that the project benefits Central Valley residents now and into the future."

Members of the Citizens for California High-Speed Rail Accountability (CCHSRA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group whose members mainly reside in the City of Hanford and surrounding rural areas, strongly disagree with the decision.

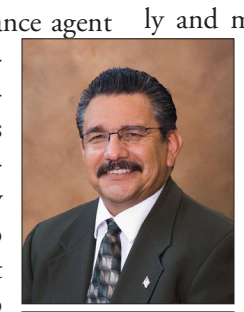
"We are disappointed in the Authority's decision to approve this plan

RAIL continued on **9 »**

Felipe Martinez Campaigns to Replace Supervisor Mike Ennis in District 5

Tony Maldonado

Felipe Martinez is one of four candidates vying to win the District 5 seat on the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, and he believes he's able to bring a breath of fresh air to the area.



Martinez, 57, is an insurance agent and owns Felipe Martinez Insurance Solutions in Porterville. In addition, Martinez is a member of the Latino Water Coalition and is currently chairman of Porterville's Step Up Committee, an offshoot of Tulare County's Step Up anti-gang initiative; he also served on the Porterville City Council.

His experiences helping others through his business and in public service, he says, gives him an edge over incumbent Mike Ennis, who has been accused of being distant to his constituents' needs and concerns by his three opposing candidates, Martinez included.

He says he'll handle things differently and make himself more available to the constituents in his district.

"If you go on the [Board of Supervisors] webpage, it says you can see your supervisor any time you want – in Visalia," Martinez said. "I would be more apt to look at an office in Porterville and would be here at least once a week."

To staff the office, Martinez said he would work with Porterville College to pick a Political Science student and open an internship for them,

MARTINEZ continued on **11 »**

Oval Park Fundraising Effort Intended to Change Perceptions

Steve Pastis

There is a fundraising effort underway to revitalize Oval Park in Visalia, which includes a current campaign at Indiegogo.com and an August 29th concert headlined by Frampton's Guitar Circus, starring Grammy-winner Peter Frampton and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Buddy Guy.

"In 2011, the City of Visalia recruited the Visalia Rescue Mission to revitalize Oval Park and the surrounding neighborhood," according to the campaign page at Indiegogo. "More commonly referred to as 'The Oval,' it is considered by locals to be Visalia's ground-zero for crime, homelessness and similar community problems, but times are changing. There has never been such a concerted effort to change the dynamic of this park and its negative perception, to attract blossoming businesses, and to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the whole community."

"It's not so much about raising money as it is to spread the word," explained Ryan Stillwater, Oval Venue coordinator for the Visalia Rescue Mission, who wants people "to think of the park as an asset rather than a liability."

Stillwater knows the perceptions many Visalians have about Oval Park,

OVAL PARK continued on **13 »**

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Say Hello to Glitcho

Today's frequent--if sardonic--observation that technology, rather than having made life more convenient, has instead spun us all off multi-tasking in too many directions, distracted by and over-dependent on our devices, is only more true as time marches forward. Yes--that was a 40-word sentence: the cell phone rang, and I lost my train of thought. It was our daughter. She had inadvertently "butt-dialed" us, as I understand the slang, and while I could hear her conversation clearly, I spent the next minute fruitlessly shouting, "Hello!" into the telephone. But that's nothing. A few months ago, transcribing an interview while at home, I was deep in concentration when the ring of a cell came through my headphones--and like Pavlov's dog I instantly tried to answer the digital recorder. I'll admit to growing flustered as I stabbed at it with my finger and the ringing continued. Insistently. Then I heard the subject of my interview say, "Hello?" And, not wanting to be rude, I actually said, "Hello," back. Aloud.

Say hello to Glitcho, the long-lost Marx Brother.

But the glitch isn't always on my end. I recently created a LinkedIn account with the sole intention of finding an old friend with whom I went from childhood through high school. He went to Yale while I went to Berkeley; he was awarded a Pulitzer in the 90s, and I was awarded the last of our five kids. But now--owning a newspaper--it would of course be a coup for us if he contributed something. Could I find him? As I understand the slang, the attempt was an "epic fail." Instead, my LinkedIn account found me--and kept inviting me, insistent as the ringing of that cell phone was during my interview transcription, to contact myself. "You understand," my wife said, not as a question, "this account of yours is pestering everyone you know." Now, I'd had no idea--but, while you can't always be unflappable, you can try your best not to appear so hopelessly benighted. "Naturally," I replied, coolly arching an eyebrow, "but at least I'm not alone."

Or am I? Am I the only one whose DVR behaves autonomously, as a television station unto itself, sometimes seemingly recording--or erasing--programs whimsically? Life is considerably less convenient when you have to physically check, at show time, if your selection is being captured from the ether. And the remote control! You'd think my calling it "The Power" would, by conferring respect, appease it. Nope. A more churlish device has never been invented. It works properly only when it wants to; most of the time, its number pad does either nothing whatsoever or else streams a single digit into the receiver. This is bad juju--and the kind of thing you begin to develop a ritual against. Something, I imagine, like the endearments you chant to your car when starting it is difficult.

At least our cars start beautifully. They've only one idiosyncrasy: the automatic--and diabolical--locking doors. Think, "Open the pod bay doors, Hal."

Ah, computers! Remember Y2K, when--it was predicted--The End would be visited upon us because the world's computers couldn't be expected to differentiate between the years 1900 (when they didn't even exist; you'd think they'd have known better) and 2000 (when they were ubiquitous)? Well, operating the computer is, for me, always something of a personal apocalypse. Mastery--who am I kidding?--of Windows 7 took me years. So when my wife and I acquired the *Voice*--and this very computer to publish it on--I felt a certain decent confidence in my abilities. Here's where I should have known better. No sooner had I started this thing when Windows 8 appeared on the screen. The death of Windows 7 was as the end of the world. And this new world? I'm like Columbus trying to discover India in Hispaniola.

New isn't always improved. In my experience, "improved" means "totally different, impossibly complex, and difficult to learn." "New" I've translated from the English as "that which is indicative of something wholly unnecessary." My wife once gave me a digital watch. It offered more functions than I can now remember, but sported just four buttons. These, if pressed and/or held in the correct magical sequences, allowed you to...I still don't know what. I prefer a mechanical watch. And the automatic models are not automatically an improvement on their manual cousins--it just means they wind themselves, something impossible to accomplish, say, in the lesser gravity of space. Which is why NASA, at least in its early days, chose for the first astronauts a very particular make. This watch took them, eventually, to the moon. It's the watch I wear today--an Omega Speedmaster Professional "Moon" watch. It's a simple, mechanical piece with two buttons that operate one chronograph--that is, a stop-watch. One button stops and starts elapsed time while the other serves as a re-set. Even I can work it! This is the model they used for timed fuel burns, and for consulting when actually bestriding the lunar surface. To this day, I remain amazed by that. And I must not be alone, because--so far as I am aware--the Omega Moon watch is still in production. But I don't trust the newer versions. Why? The last moon shot was Apollo 17, in December of 1972. Omega surely must have been tempted since that time to use "new" components. So I purchased a vintage model, from 1971.

It runs fast.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

2014 June Primary Election Predictions

Nate Silver is notorious for his uncanny accuracy in predicting presidential elections. Between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, Mr. Silver correctly predicted the winner of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. But local elections can be a bit trickier. Mr. Silver had the advantage of many national polls from which to choose and the luxury of a larger margin of error. With 130 million voters during a presidential election, versus just 40,000 for Tulare County Sheriff and District Attorney, and only around 8,000 for the supervisors' race, making accurate predictions might be just beyond the grasp of even *Visalia Times-Delta*'s political analyst.

Other factors that frustrate a prognosticator are low voter turnout, the "jungle primary," and early voting. Low voter turnout compounds the challenge by making it harder to dilute the crazies. But mail-in ballots makes it impossible for the candidates to campaign. Sixty percent of registered voters received their ballot May 5th, and many have already voted. Early voting can lead to unlikely victories, such as when Charles Ulmschneider won a seat on the Visalia Unified School District Board after the *Visalia Times-Delta* revealed he actually worked and lived in Stockton.

In 2012, California had its first test run of the open primary. This is our second stab at it, and many politicians are hoping the new system goes away. In an open primary the two top vote-getting candidates proceed to the November general election, regardless of their party affiliation. This was supposed to remedy the gridlock in Sacramento, but resulted in some head-scratching primary results.

Even so, this should not be a difficult election to call. The June primary is not about who is going to come in first, but who is going to come in second. Predicting that is a little more complicated. Usually, no one remembers who comes in second--unless you are my dad, who is still pissed that Richard Nixon came in second to Jack Kennedy in 1960. But after the June primary, we are all going to be inundated with Mr. or Ms. Second Place trying unsuccessfully to knock-off the favorite in November. California is not in a "kick the bums out" mood, and neither is Tulare County--so incumbents should easily keep their seats.

Not every race merits an analysis or prediction. Some statewide races have not generated sufficient interest or have viable candidates besides the incumbent. The Porterville City Council has nine candidates that are not well-known outside of their town. Other races have no challenger--such as Steve Worthley's in Supervisorial District 4, and Jean Fuller's in State Senate District 16.

Tulare County District Attorney

Candidates: Appointed District Attorney Tim Ward and former Assistant District Attorney Ralph Kaelble. This race will be determined in June.

This is the hottest race in Tulare County. Coincidently, it's also the hottest race in Fresno County, where two similarly aged and experienced women are in a hot cat fight to be the victor. The contenders in Fresno are incumbent Elizabeth Egan and challenger Lisa Smittcamp.

In Tulare County, Mr. Kaelble has put up the best fight of a challenger this election. He kept the media momentum on his side and received some key endorsements. Mr. Kaelble made a strong point when he said that it's risky for stakeholders to endorse the challenger and it's rare for the police not to endorse the sitting District Attorney. While Mr. Ward has a long list of endorsements, Mr. Kaelble has the support of the "boots on the ground" such as several police departments and law enforcement associations.

Mr. Ward says that the difference between them is night and day, but it's not. This is a nonpartisan office but both are registered Republicans. They are both lawyers, they paid for their own educations, worked their way up the ranks, raised a similar amount of campaign cash and have roughly the same number of annoying campaign signs--well, Mr. Kaelble beats Mr. Ward on the number of signs.

Despite everything Mr. Kaelble has going for him, Mr. Ward is the establishment's candidate. Mr. Ward has endorsed incumbents, or highly favored candidates like Rudy Mendoza, and has received their money and their endorsements in return. Besides this, Mr. Ward is the sitting DA and has displayed superior speaking skills at important events filled with the type of people who take the time to cast a ballot.

Prediction: Tim Ward 1st; Ralph Kaelble 2nd by 500 votes.

Tulare County Sheriff

Candidates: Acting Sheriff Mike Boudreaux and retired Undersheriff Dave Whaley. This race will be determined in June.

This race would be just as tight as the Tulare County District Attorney's if not for the money, and a few other things. Mr. Boudreaux has raised an amazing $309,375 to Mr. Whaley's $91,616, and money talks--especially in an election. But Mr. Boudreaux has had to overcome his critics in the media. He received bad press about an association embezzlement scandal and the possible illegality of his political campaign's holding a raffle. But when the sitting District Attorney has endorsed you, legal cases against you tend to get dropped.

Mr. Whaley's main detraction is his relevancy. What has he been doing in the last five years, and can he catch up to 2014? To make matters worse, just because Tulare County is one of the top agricultural producers in the country, doesn't mean our sheriff has to wear a ten-gallon hat.

But this area can be backwards. Not many counties outside the Central Valley, except maybe Modoc, would tolerate its sheriff holding a gun raffle. If our sheriff is going to raffle off guns, then our District Attorney should raffle off some medical marijuana. The winners would just need to show up with their medical marijuana card to pick up their prize. Because we need more drugs on the street just as much as we need more guns.

Prediction: Mike Boudreaux over Dave Whaley by a landslide.

Governor

Candidates: There are fifteen candidates listed on the June ballot. The top two will proceed to the November general election. The only three serious contenders are Democratic Governor Jerry Brown; Republicans State Assemblyman Tim Donnelly and Neel Kashkari.

This race breaks the rule that money talks in politics. Mr. Kashkari has raised nearly $1 million to Mr. Donnelly's thirty-five cents. Yet Mr. Kashkari is losing to his fellow Republican by double digits in the polls. This begs the question: if Mr. Donnelly is creating so much excitement and support, why is he broke? The jungle primary isn't helping. In a traditional primary, Mr. Kashkari would get the vote of any Republican to the left of the Tea Party. In the "Top Two" he has to compete for the moderate vote that will now go to Gov. Brown.

Let's recap Mr. Donnelly's performance, shall we? He recently accused Mr. Kashkari of supporting Sharia Law in a thinly veiled racist nod to Mr. Kashkari's Middle Eastern-sounding name and skin tone. Mr. Donnelly cast the lone Assembly vote against a bill that would bar the sale of the Confederate flag on state property. He has compared President Obama's gun policies to Adolf Hitler's. He is running a guerilla campaign--which is code for "no money." He is on probation for trying to board an airplane with a loaded handgun. He rides around the state in a borrowed RV called "Liberty Express" and is a favorite of the tin foil hat guild whose fairly amusing nickname for the current governor is "Jerry Clown."

There is only one thing the Tea Party hates more than a Democrat, and that is a moderate Republican--especially one who voted for Mr. Obama. Mr. Kashkari's moderation blurs the conservative Republicans' ability to see that he has the budgetary chops to run a complicated state budget and is politically moderate enough on social views to win a statewide office. The problem is, other influential moderate Republicans just recently grew a pair and started to endorse Mr. Kashkari. But they are a day late and a dollar short as the electorate has already started mailing in their ballots. While the Republican establishment sat with their collective thumbs up their backsides, Mr. Donnelly went unchecked in destroying the party. Thus, Mr. Kashkari doesn't have a chance and can't even poll above a registered sex offender.

Prediction: Todd Akin

Congressional District 22

Candidates: Republican Incumbent Devin Nunes, "Republican" John Catano; Democrat Suzanna "Sam" Aguilera-Marrero. The top two vote-getters will proceed to the November general election.

Will Congressional District 22 send two Republicans to the general election because this is a conservative area? No. Mr. Catano might have made a serious miscalculation by changing his affiliation last year from Democratic to Republican. In 2012, two Republicans did go on to the general election because of the "Top Two" style primary, but that's because they were two very strong candidates. While Rep. Nunes is going to suck up all the Republican votes, Ms. Aguilera-Marrero will get the rest. She won't get that many, but all one has to do is come in second.

Prediction: Devin Nunes 1st; Suzanna Aguilera-Marrero 2nd by at least 30 points.

Congressional District 21

Candidates: Republican Incumbent David Valadao; Democrats Amanda Renteria and John Hernandez.

Of the six congressional districts labeled "competitive" in California, District 22 is the only one considered by the political pundits as a real toss-up. But, two years ago, with a 14-point Democratic voter advantage and a 72% Hispanic ethnic make-up, Rep. Valadao trounced John Hernandez--in a presidential election year, no less. If Democrats can't take this seat during a presidential election, it's not happening on an off-year.

Both Ms. Renteria and Rep. Valadao have pretty much ignored Mr. Hernandez this election season. In 2012, Mr. Hernandez was the surprise spoiler in the congressional primary, squeaking past Democratic favorite Xiong Blong. But Ms. Renteria has proven a stronger candidate and better fundraiser than Mr. Blong. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, whose sole purpose is to bump off Republicans, has put Ms. Renteria on their "Red to Blue" list, which will translate into a lot of campaign cash. Ms. Renteria has received just as much attention from the Republican Party, who sees her as a real threat. Rep. Valadao has tried to label her as an "outsider" and "Washington's pick for this congressional seat." But as a native of Woodlake, and daughter of immigrant farm workers, the only people listening to that rhetoric are hardcore conservatives who weren't going to vote for her anyway.

Prediction: David Valadao 1st; Amanda Renteria 2nd.

State Assembly District 26

Candidates: Republicans Rudy Mendoza, Esther Barajas, Devon Mathis, and Teresa Andres; Democrats Carlton Jones, Derek Thomas, and Ruben Macareno. The two top vote-getters advance to the November general election.

With no incumbent running, and an open primary, this race has become the mother of all free-for-alls. Out of 80 races for the California Assembly, only three have more candidates than this district. The open primary means that two candidates from the same party could be sent to the general election. Two Republicans, who filed their preliminary paperwork last summer, stand out from the rest--Mr. Mendoza and Ms. Barajas.

Mr. Mendoza has the most money, experience, endorsements and name recognition to win in November. So the question isn't who is going to win the primary, but who is going to lose to Mr.

POLITICAL FIX continued on **10 »**

Cheryl & Gary DeCoursey.

Grocery Outlet Bargain Market to Open First Store in Dinuba

Staff Reports

Grocery Outlet is coming to Dinuba. The new store will open its doors at 8am on Thursday, May 29, followed by a ribbon-cutting at 9am. A public grand opening event will begin at 8am on Saturday, May 31.

Co-owner/operator Gary DeCoursey has more than 22 years of experience in the grocery retail and distribution industries for companies such as Safeway and Pepsi Co. When he was in the early stages of applying to be a Grocery Outlet owner, his wife, Cheryl, decided to team up with him and become a co-owner.

"We are overjoyed to bring the new Grocery Outlet store to the Dinuba community," said Gary DeCoursey. "Residents will now have a place to purchase high-quality products at affordable prices in a family-friendly environment."

The DeCourseys are creating 35 jobs with the store opening, and are currently accepting applications.

The grand opening event is open to the public and will feature free coffee and treats, free eco-frugal reusable bags for the first 500 customers, free Spin & Win on the Wheel of Bargains prizes, free face painting for kids, a free play magic cart and more.

Attendees can enter for a chance to win one of three grand prizes from May 31 through July 4. Grand prizes include: Phat Cycles Sea Wind Classic His and Hers Bicycle Cruisers; a Spirit E-220 Gas Grill from Dinuba Lumber Company and a $100 fresh meat certificate from Grocery Outlet; and free groceries for one year ($600 value). The prize drawing will be held at noon on Saturday, July 5.

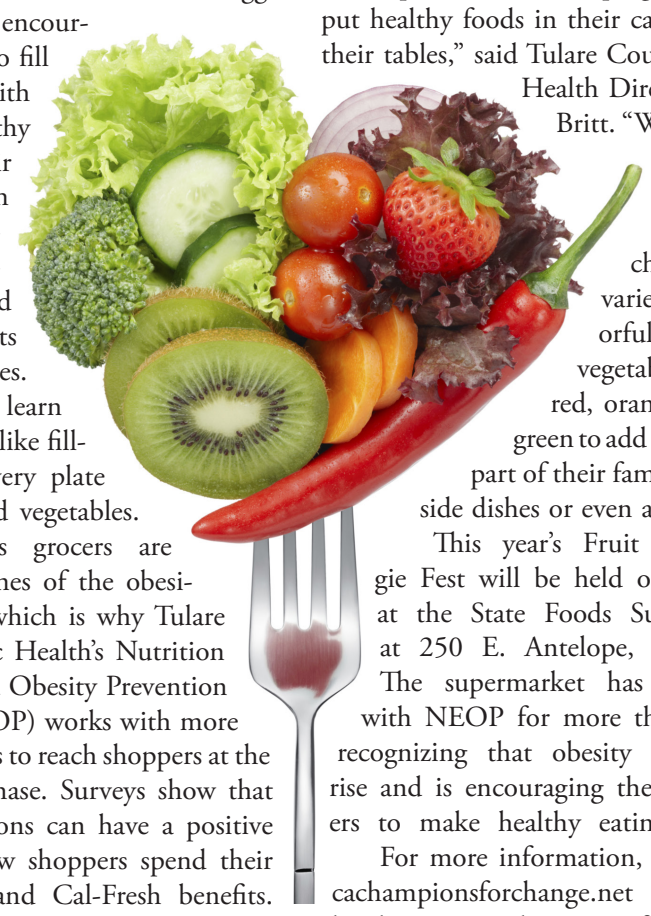
In addition, attendees at the grand opening event can purchase a hot dog and soda for $1, with all proceeds benefitting the Dinuba High School Leadership Group. Attendees can also meet their Frugal Friends, Lois Prices and Ben Saven, who have scheduled appearances throughout the day. The DeCourseys will donate a pallet of food worth $1,000 to the Open Gate Ministries at the ribbon-cutting event, which is hosted by the Dinuba Chamber of Commerce.

The new Grocery Outlet in Dinuba is located at 667 N. Alta Ave., and will be open 8am to 9pm every day.

The expansion into Dinuba is one of 18 new Grocery Outlet stores scheduled to open this year. For more information on Grocery Outlet, visit www.GroceryOutlet.com.

Grocers Statewide Help Shoppers Get Healthy with Nutrition Education

Staff Reports



Each May, the Tulare County Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) and its grocery retail partners statewide hold Fruit and Veggie Fest events to encourage shoppers to fill their carts with the best healthy foods for their families, which includes plenty of fresh, frozen, dried and canned fruits and vegetables. Shoppers also learn healthy habits like filling half of every plate with fruits and vegetables.

California's grocers are on the frontlines of the obesity epidemic, which is why Tulare County Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention program (NEOP) works with more than 700 stores to reach shoppers at the point of purchase. Surveys show that retail promotions can have a positive impact on how shoppers spend their food dollars and Cal-Fresh benefits.

"From in-store healthy food demonstrations and store tours, to special offers on fruits and vegetables, our retail partners are helping shoppers put healthy foods in their carts and on their tables," said Tulare County Public Health Director Jason Britt. "We also provide shoppers with tips like choosing a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables like red, orange or dark green to add as the main part of their family's meals, side dishes or even as desserts."

This year's Fruit and Veggie Fest will be held on May 21 at the State Foods Supermarket at 250 E. Antelope, Woodlake. The supermarket has partnered with NEOP for more than a year, recognizing that obesity is on the rise and is encouraging their customers to make healthy eating choices.

For more information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net or Facebook.com/CaChampionsforChange. For Cal-Fresh information, call 877-847-3663.

Visalia Announces Street Overlays

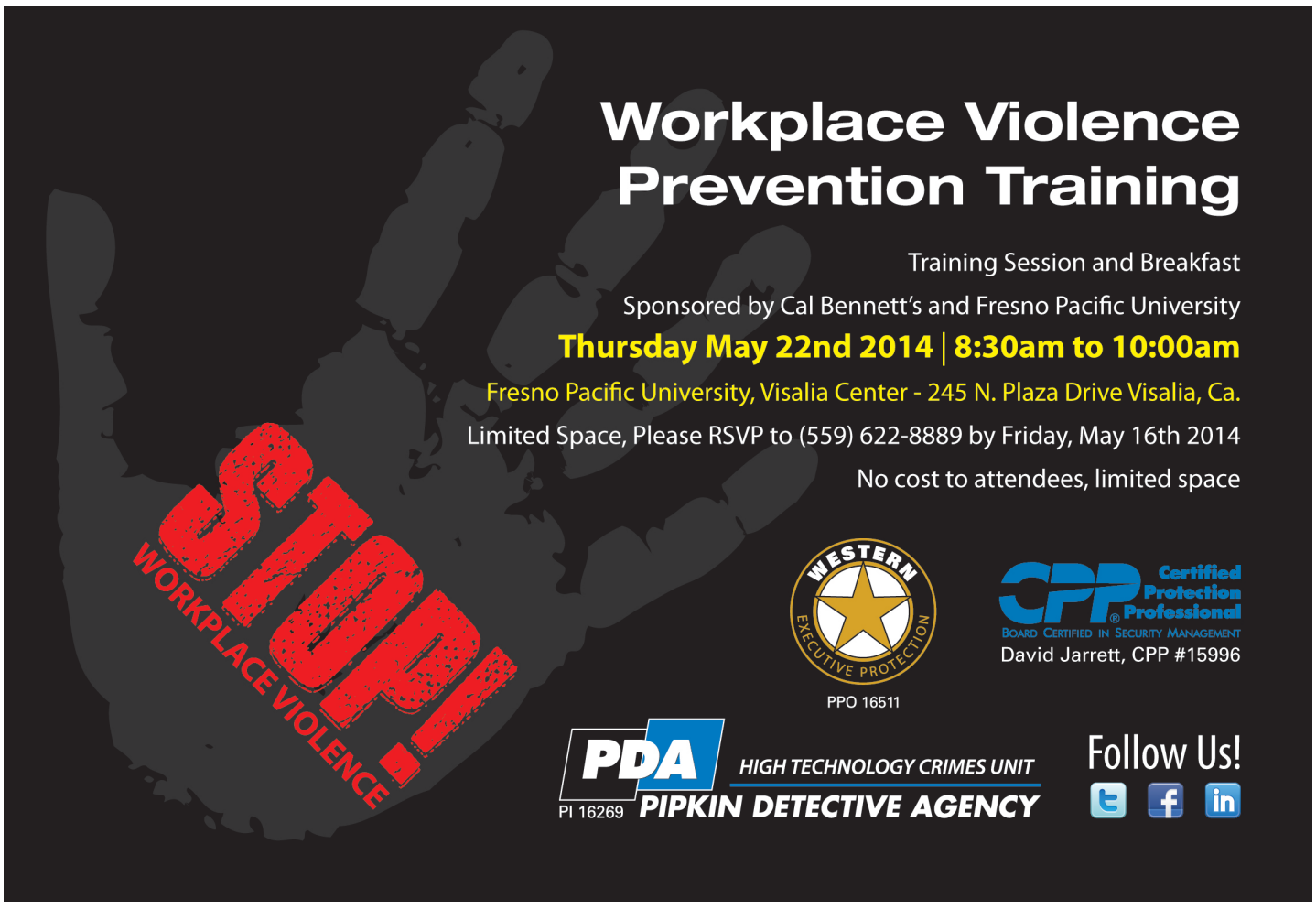
Street improvement projects have been underway since Monday at various locations in the City of Visalia, and completion is expected in August. Traffic control will be in place to direct motorists around the work areas.

Public impacts are expected to be minimal for concrete installation, which occurs from May 12-July 10, and electrical work from May 12-19. Grinding and asphalt overlay will be done from 6am to 2:30pm on the following days:

- Walnut Avenue, from Cottonwood to Linwood streets, and Akers Street, from Cambridge to Wagner avenues, June 19-26;
- Giddings Street, from Walnut to Tulare avenues, July 1-3;
- Court Street, from Tulare to Sequoia avenues, July 9-10;
- Main Street, from Burke Street to Ben Maddox Way, July 15-16;
- Demaree Street, from Hillsdale to Goshen avenues, July 23-25;
- Hurley Avenue, from Atwood to Chinowth streets, July 30-31.

Some concrete work (pedestrian ramps, curbs, gutter) will be done, along with the removal and replacement of some failed sections of paving in these areas. Access to homes or businesses will be maintained throughout the duration of the project. Directly affected businesses and residents will be notified in advance of work being done by the contractor. Work schedule may be subject to change, and updates will be provided as needed.

For more information call the 24-hour project hotline at 994-4502.

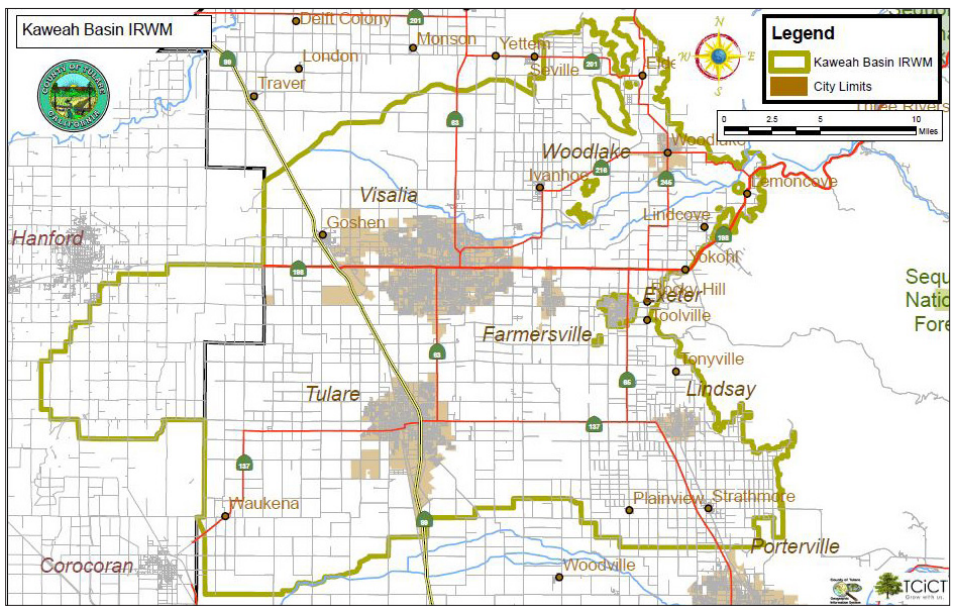


Visalia Chamber CEO Glenn Morris Announces Resignation

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce announced on May 9th that Glenn Morris, its current president and CEO, has resigned, effective June 20. Morris has accepted a new opportunity with the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and will be relocating. He will continue in his current role through the end of June, providing continued leadership and assistance with the transition.

"I have been blessed to work in a community which values business and recognizes the importance of creating jobs and opportunities for economic vitality," said Morris. "The leaders that I have come to know through the chamber have always supported me in our efforts to build the premier community in the Valley in which to live, raise a family and operate a business. I look forward to taking the lessons I have learned here to my new community."

An announcement about the search process will be issued in the coming weeks.



Within the yellow lines denoting the Kaweah Basin, landowners are able to receive free assistance in capping their wells.

Funding Available to Plug and Cap Abandoned Water Wells in Tulare County

Staff Reports

Tulare County currently has funding available to plug and cap private unused wells within the boundaries of the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District. There is no cost to the property owner to participate in the abandoned well program, and all work will be completed by a licensed contractor.

The county is currently working with Self-Help Enterprises to sign up property owners who wish to have their unused wells properly closed and sealed. If you have an old, unused well and would like to participate in the county's no-cost program, call Self-Help Enterprises staff member Shauna Dolin at 802-1647.

Abandoned wells are hazardous and a liability to landowners.

The abandoned well program funding is available to property owners who reside in and around the rural areas of Visalia, Goshen, West Goshen, Tulare, Waukena, Farmersville, Woodlake, Ivanhoe, Elderwood, Woodlake, Lemoncove, Lindcove, Yokohl Valley, Exeter, Tooleville, Tonyville, Lindsay, Plainview, Strathmore and Tract 92 – the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District. There are no income restrictions, and rural areas within the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District qualify for the program.

Unused or abandoned wells can be a safety hazard and can contaminate groundwater. An abandoned well is a direct conduit from the surface to the groundwater below. Contaminants that enter the well can flow directly down into the groundwater without the natural filtration of soils. There is also a risk of injury to people and animals if a well is not covered.

Properly plugging a well helps keep your water supply safe, removes a potential threat to your family's health, and reduces your liability and protects the value of your property.

All landowners with an abandoned well are responsible for the proper plugging of that well. As stated in the Tulare County Water Well Ordinance, "It is the duty of every owner of land on which there is a well which is not being used to cap the well or [put in place] a watertight seal… Any well which has been placed inactive for a period of more than one year shall be deemed abandoned and be required to properly destroy said well…" (TC Ordinance Code §4-13-1740).

This project is funded by a grant from the Department of Water Resources.

Learn more about the program by visiting http://www.selfhelpenterprises.org/.

Rebecca Salgado, Louie Campos and Diane Koletzke show a group of crosses.
Photo by Tony Maldonado/Valley Voice

Tulare County Group Protests Immigration Policy, Honors 684 Dead

Compiled by Tony Maldonado

Tulare County for Families, a local pro-immigration reform group, delivered over 650 white crosses to Representative Devin Nunes' office on Thursday, May 13.

The crosses were made to honor 684 people whose remains were found after their attempts to cross the border, and each name was read aloud outside Nunes' office on a megaphone in a solemn ceremony before they were delivered to Nunes' office. Between 20 and 30 people attended the protest.

The ceremony, organizers said, was intended to highlight the need for immigration reform and call for an end to the separation of families through deportations. In addition, the group called for constructive action by Nunes to advance HR-15, an immigration reform bill with bipartisan support in the Senate that has stalled in the House.

"When we break up families by deporting husbands from their wives, mothers from their children, brothers from their sisters, daughters from their fathers, we are inviting them to become another one of these names," said Suzanne Aguilera-Marrero, a candidate running against Nunes in the upcoming election and a TC4F member.

"With this action and ceremony, we are remembering that each name that is read represents a life that was sacrificed for the want of an opportunity at the American dream… an opportunity to provide a better life for their families. We all bear some responsibility for these deaths, as this country runs on a supply of cheap labor."

The names on the crosses were culled from coroner reports compiled by the Binational Immigration Institute (BIM) at the University of Arizona, and represent remains found in the desert from 1990-2005.

Many of the remains are those of children, and even babies. An updated report, released by the BIM in the summer of 2013, indicates that although border crossings are down, deaths in the desert continue at the same pace.

According to the updated report, "border enforcement strategies undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000s effectively pushed would-be migrants into extremely remote areas," a phenomenon the researchers labeled "The Funnel Effect." Those areas comprise the harshest and most extreme desert and mountain environments in which to travel; many migrants perish in unimaginable suffering.

In a statement given to local news channel CBS47, a senior policy advisor said that the "professional agitators involved are known Democratic Party activists," and said that Nunes is a vocal advocate for comprehensive immigration reform.

The same advisor told the station that "[TC4F] and others like it on both sides make passage of comprehensive reform less likely with each passing day."

According to the group Humane Borders, which put emergency water stations in the desert in an effort to prevent deaths, the remains of 2,471 border crossers were recovered from 1990 to 2013; at least 761 sets of remains are still unidentified.

"There's a lot of people dying in the desert needlessly," Mark Araiza, a TC4F member, said. "[The United States government] is purposefully funneling people into the Sonoran Desert and forcing them to walk through the desert into the United States, and it's to die. And the deaths have to stop."

"We call on Representative Nunes to act on comprehensive immigration reform to provide a pathway to citizenship for 11 million aspiring Americans," Aguilera-Marrero said.

"Hispanics represent 44 percent of his district, and he needs to realize we should have a say in what he tells Congress," Araiza said.

He encouraged those interested in Tulare County for Families to attend their meetings at 1811 W. Sunnyside Ave. in Visalia, the SEIU Local 521 office, held every Tuesday at 5:30pm.

The group also has a Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/tularecountyforfamilies.

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California DAR to Place Historical Marker at Hanford Chinese School

Staff Reports

The California State Society Daughters of the American Revolution (CSSDAR) is recognizing a representative group that helped with the development and growth of our nation, state and local communities, by placing a DAR Historical Marker at the Chinese School in Hanford on Saturday, June 7.

In California, the primary influence of the Chinese began in the mid-19th century, when Chinese immigrants came to work in the gold fields of northeastern California. As the gold rush wound down, the hardworking laborers were enlisted to work on the first transcontinental railroad. Most of the Chinese workers came without their families, to earn money to send home to impoverished areas of China. It was their intention to reunite as the men settled into life in California. A very small number of women did come to California, but most were either wives of Chinese merchants or became part of the "entertainment" industry.

Though their labor was necessary, the Chinese were not welcomed by other workers because they were seen as competition. The new immigrants were willing to do the backbreaking work for less money. Animosity grew and laws were passed that encouraged greater prejudice and even more discrimination. The 1870's saw many massacres and forced relocations of the Chinese migrants into what became known as "Chinatowns." They isolated themselves for protection and cultural community. These Chinatowns formed in several areas of northern California; one in particular was established in Hanford and became known as China Alley.

Even though they were not encouraged or allowed to assimilate into the community culture of Hanford, the Chinese had a positive impact on local commerce and the economy. They influenced agriculture by introducing their long-practiced farming methods. They were recognized for their knowledge in Eastern medicine and were sought for treatment by members of all ethnic groups. The industrious Chinese people recognized needs in the community and provided services like restaurants, laundries and grocery stores. Several present-day restaurants and markets in Hanford came from humble beginnings in China Alley.

Education was highly prized, as was Chinese heritage. In order for children to learn of their culture and heritage, the Chinese community established a schoolroom in the basement of the Sue Chung Kee store with Y.T. Sue as teacher. After a short time, the classroom was moved next door to a room in the Taoist Temple. By 1922, the need was realized for a larger school and funds were raised to provide a permanent location for their children's cultural education, grades K-12.

The curriculum included Chinese customs, culture, philosophy and literature, as well as oral and written language in order to see that their families' heritage and personal histories were preserved. Children attended after their school day at the local public school as well as on Saturday. Within 30-35 years, however, the Chinese community diminished in size, families with school-aged children moved from the area, and the school was closed.

The Hanford Chinese School is now the Temple Theater. Photo courtesy DAR.

Rather than demolish the building, the people of Hanford found another use for it, a way that has preserved it for 50 years. In 1964, a three-way contract with the Kings Players, the Chinese community and the City of Hanford was established. The building is now used regularly to provide another cultural dimension, live theatre, to the entire community. The building itself is still known as the Chinese School and serves as a reminder of the many years the Chinese of the area were committed to retaining their language and customs, giving their children the understanding of where they came from as they prepared for their future.

California DAR State Regent Debra Parent Jamison grew up in nearby Lemoore. It was her desire to request that the National Society DAR allow the California State Society to place a DAR historical marker in the locale where she spent so much time with friends in Hanford.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in 1890 to promote patriotism, preserve American history and support better education for our nation's children. Its members are descended from the patriots who won American independence during the Revolutionary War. With more than 175,000 members in approximately 3,000 chapters worldwide, DAR is one of the world's largest and most active service organizations.

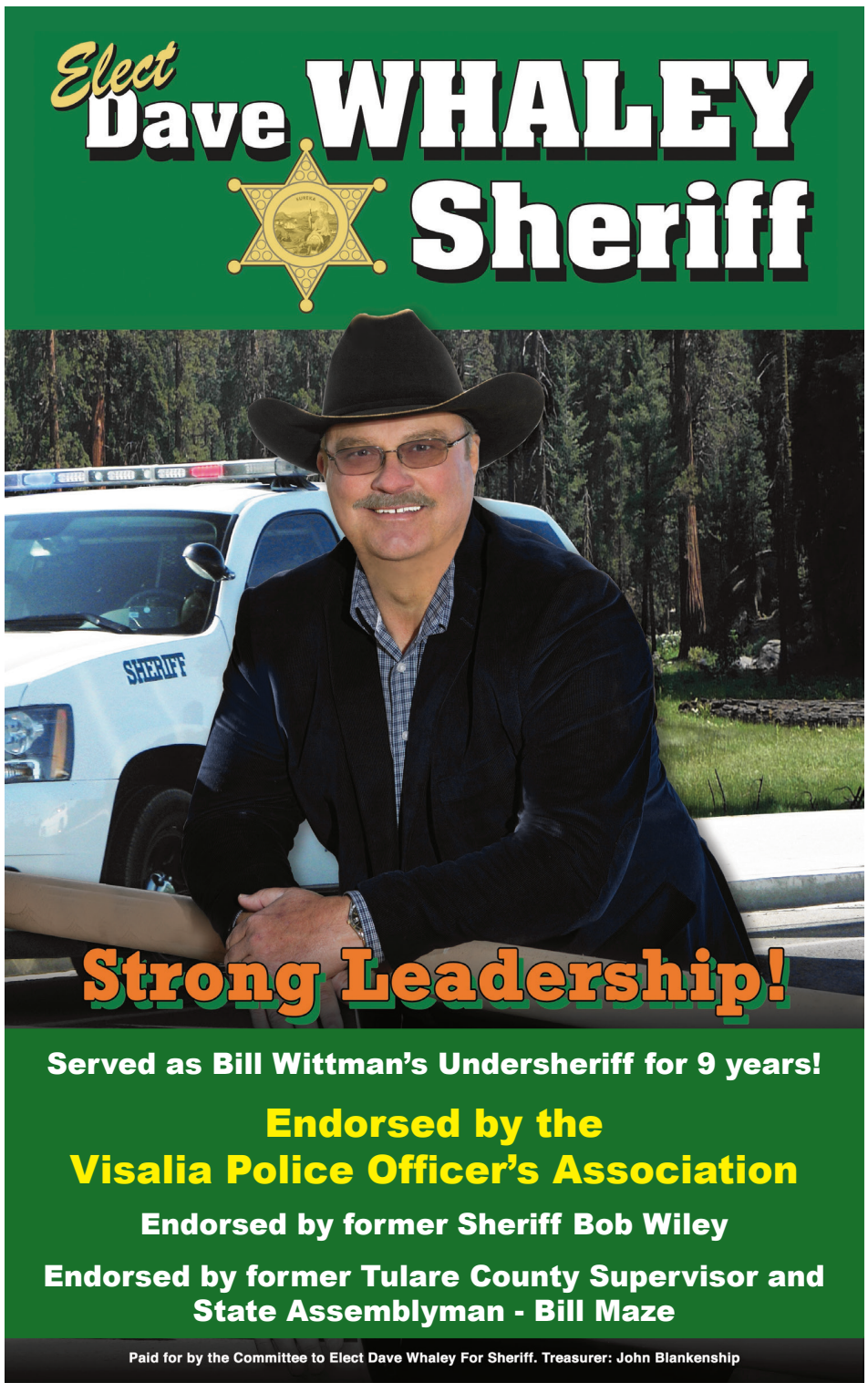
To learn more about the work of today's DAR, visit www.DAR.org.

Statement by Republican Leader Conway on Swearing-In of Toni Atkins as Assembly Speaker

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare, released the following statement on Monday about the swearing-in of San Diego Assemblywoman Toni Atkins as the 69th Speaker of the California Assembly:

"Today, California witnessed something that has happened only twice before in our state's history – the swearing-in of a woman as the Speaker of the Assembly. This is an especially poignant occasion for me, as today marks the first time in state history that the assembly speaker and the minority leader are both women.

"As we mark this important milestone, I congratulate Toni Atkins for officially taking the reins of power as our new speaker. I also want to salute my friend John A. Pérez for his service to the people of California as our speaker over the past four years. While Speaker Atkins and I will not perfectly align on every issue, I extend to her my hand of bipartisan cooperation, and stand ready to work across party lines to ensure that the voices of all Californians are well represented in the People's House."



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Who Does Law Enforcement Overwhelmingly Support for District Attorney?

RALPH F. KAELBLE

FOR TULARE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- Visalia Police Officer's Association
- Tulare County Deputy Sheriff's Association
- Tulare County Probation Association
- Dinuba Police Officer Association
- Exeter Police Officer's Association
- Lindsay Police Officer's Association
- Porterville Peace Officer's Association

"This is the first time in the history of Tulare County that the sitting District Attorney could not obtain the endorsement of the rank and file of the county's law enforcement officers. Ralph Kaelble has the support of law enforcement and people of Tulare County. I ask that you vote for Ralph Kaelble for Tulare County District Attorney."

– DON GALLIAN

Former Tulare County Assistant District Attorney

PARTIAL LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS

- Don H. Gallian, Former Tulare County Assistant District Attorney
- Howard Broadman, Retired Judge
- Jay W. Powell, Former Tulare County District Attorney
- Steve Nelsen, Visalia City Mayor
- Scott Harness, Dinuba City Council
- Emilio Joey Morales, Dinuba Vice Mayor
- Mike Smith, Dinuba City Council
- Ramona Villarreal-Padilla, Lindsay City Mayor
- Steven Mecum, Lindsay City Council Member/Correctional Officer
- Rosaena Sanchez, Lindsay City Council Member
- Carlton Jones, Tulare City Vice Mayor
- Gayle Cain, Former Tulare County District Attorney Victim/Witness Coordinator
- Guy Christian, Former Tulare County District Attorney Welfare Fraud Investigator
- Julia Patino, Former Tulare County District Attorney Victim/Witness Coordinator
- Valerie Barnhart, Former Tulare County District Attorney Legal Secretary III
- Milt Stowe, Chairman Porterville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Greg Gomez, Farmersville City Mayor Pro-Tem
- Tule River Tribal Council
- El Centro Mexicano American Latino
- Tulare County Association of Realtors
- Tulare County Hispanic Roundtable

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Cal Water Completes 1st Phase of Goshen Project

Staff Reports

West Goshen residents now have a permanent supply of safe tap water to use and drink, as California Water Service Company (Cal Water) has completed the first phase of a water mainline extension project that connects the West Goshen community with its Visalia water system.

This phase included installing 8,645 feet of 12-inch ductile iron water main from Cal Water's existing service area to West Goshen, and serving the community via a master-metered connection overseen by the West Goshen Mutual Water Company. Crews also installed eight new fire hydrants to improve fire protection.

Cal Water is now planning the final phase of the project, which includes replacing aging water mains in West Goshen with new main and connecting individual customer services to the system. This phase is expected to take six months to complete.

Cal Water had operated West Goshen's existing system since early 2013, when the last of the town's two wells malfunctioned and could no longer provide water that met federal and state water quality standards to the town's 500 residents.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) initially approached Cal Water to assist the town with an emergency disinfection plan; together with CDPH and Self-Help Enterprises, the group developed a plan to repair and maintain the town's water system.

CDPH recently provided a grant to permanently connect the entire West Goshen system to Cal Water's system. This state funding will prevent Cal Water's existing Visalia District customers from bearing the costs of adding these new customers to the system.

"We are excited that West Goshen residents now have a permanent supply of high-quality water they can rely on," said Cal Water District Manager Scott Bailey. "From the beginning, CDPH, Self-Help Enterprises, West Goshen Mutual and Cal Water have all been focused on doing the right thing and helping our neighbors, and that commitment is what made this outcome possible."

Cal Water serves about 132,200 people through 41,200 service connections in Visalia. The company has provided water service in the area since 1927. Additional information may be obtained online at www.calwater.com.

Top 3 Ag Producing Counties in the Country Now Without Water

California Citrus Mutual

The United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the final results of the 2012 Census of Agriculture this month. Of the top 10 agricultural producing counties in the country, nine are in California. The top three are Fresno, Tulare and Kings County.

"The timing of this report exemplifies the dire situation Sacramento has created by not allocating existing water supplies to agricultural users," says California Citrus Mutual President Joel Nelsen. "The top three agricultural producing counties in the United States are at risk of decimation due the skewed politics governing our water supply."

Citrus alone has at least 50,000 acres of vulnerability in the Central Valley at an estimated expense of $3 billion due to zero water allocation. The impact to local communities will be equally as devastating. Trees are being pushed right now as a result of inaction by state agencies. If this is allowed to continue and water is not delivered to agriculture, not only trees will be lost but jobs as well. Communities will suffer, food prices will rise, and the Central Valley will no longer be the breadbasket of the world.

"It is incredulous that a system created to preserve agricultural production in this state by creating a sustainable water supply is now being leveraged to service environmental needs at greater levels than are necessary, while agriculture is left to go dry," continues Nelsen.

According to the USDA's survey, the market value of agricultural products sold in California totals $42.6 billion, up $8.7 billion from 2007. Meanwhile production expenses in the state have skyrocketed at a much higher rate by $35.5 billion since 2007. Now, growers are paying upwards of $1,200 per acre-foot for emergency water in hopes of keeping their trees alive.

"The water crisis we are experiencing currently has been caused by bureaucrats in Sacramento," says Nelsen. "We know that there is sufficient water to supply the needs of the exchange contractors in order to lessen their draw on Millerton, thereby allowing Friant to meet the minimum needs of its users."

The exchange contractors must receive at least 300,000 acre-feet from the Delta in order for the Friant-Kern Canal to have sufficient resources to meet the 200,000 acre-feet minimum requirement of its users.

Last month, Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order to the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to expedite approvals of voluntary water transfers to areas of need. Citrus growers and communities within the Friant service area, however, are still without water despite the availability of additional supplies from recent storm events.

There have been many opportunities for the state water agencies to communicate with stakeholders the amount of water that will be delivered, yet they consistently fail to provide numbers. A conference call was scheduled, but after being postponed twice it was cancelled.

"The lack of communication by federal and state administrations to producers of fresh fruits and vegetables regarding future deliveries is unacceptable," says Nelsen.

A vast majority of the Central Valley's $1.5 billion citrus industry is located within the Friant Service Area. Due to the unwillingness of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to cooperate with state and federal lawmakers and agencies, an estimated 50,000 acres of citrus in the Central Valley is at risk of being forced out of production.

We now know that because of the February and March storms there is sufficient supply to service the Friant Canal's minimum needs of 200,000 acre-feet. However, "NMFS fails to realize the disastrous impacts of their unwillingness to reevaluate the actual needs of the fish and reach a balanced solution for all stakeholders," says Nelsen. "Growers are now being forced to make difficult decisions as the bureaucrats at NMFS fail to reach a decision of their own.

"This is not just about trees, it is a matter of public health," continues Nelsen. "Unless our growers receive their fair share of water from the Friant Canal, our communities will suffer without the economic driver of a vibrant citrus industry in the Central Valley.

"I ask, is it worth sending excess amounts of water down the river at the expense of an entire industry and the 20,000 jobs it creates?" concludes Nelsen.

OUR NEXT ISSUE IS: 5 JUNE, 2014

Rail

Continued from p. 1

before fully mitigating its impacts," said CCHSRA Co-Chair Frank Oliveira. "The Authority made it clear in the meeting that they did not have to respond to our comments. Since that was the case, I am not sure what the point of the last public comment period was or the point of asking the public to comment at the meeting. Perhaps it shows that they want the public to think that they care or something – a public image thing.

"We find the document to only address the things that they want to work around, and it does not adequately address known environmental impacts that are on the ground in front of us – things that pose risk to everyone that are known and should be addressed," he added.

On May 6, the Authority's board of directors heard a staff presentation and took public comments on the Fresno to Bakersfield Final EIR/EIS. The following day, they considered whether to certify the document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approved the project and adopted the document required under CEQA. The board then voted unanimously to certify the Fresno-to-Bakersfield Section Final EIR/EIS, and unanimously approved a high-speed rail alignment within the Fresno-to-Bakersfield project section.

"What they did was approve their own plan that they declared met the minimum standards of CEQA," said Oliveira. "They also get to declare what the minimum standard of CEQA means as it relates to their plan. We expected that they would do what they did."

"This agreement is an extremely important investment in our future that will benefit Central Valley residents as we still have unacceptably poor air quality, which we see that through high asthma rates for children," said Richards. "Just last week, reports from the California Environmental Protection Agency and the American Lung Association found that the Central Valley still has some of the worst air quality in the nation. As both a Central Valley resident and business owner, I believe that through high-speed rail, we will be able improve the livability of the valley and make the air cleaner for everyone, while at the same time, building new economic and job opportunities for our region."

"I was surprised during the meeting when board members justified their decisions by proclaiming without their intervention we would all perish in poverty and bad air while somehow agriculture will be saved by this," commented Olivera, before sarcastically adding, "I suppose we should thank them.

"The reality is that the Authority does not have the funding to successfully construct through the area covered by the EIR, which means they will build a pile of unfinished dirt between Madera and Bakersfield," Olivera continued, adding that $25 billion was needed to start passenger revenue service.

"Until the Authority can demonstrate that it has the funds to complete a project that provides HSR service from the Central Valley to Southern California and then to the Bay Area, the long-term and broader benefits will not be realized and the merits of the project will be in question," said Oakland-based attorney Jason Holder in a press release.

Kings County farmers and other residents are also concerned about the proposed path of the line as it passes through Kings County, explained CCHSRA Co-Chair Aaron Fukuda.

"There are too many curves and turns," said Fukuda. "The curves are too sharp and meander in and out. The funny curves and shapes affect the farmland." He then commented about post-election decision to not follow existing transportation corridors as promised.

"If you're not on a main corridor, you double your impact because you're having impact on both sides," he said. "We've tried to explain this to them. The Authority staff reported that everything is OK. They falsified reports that everything was OK, that in Kings County 'there's no problem.'"

"The Authority states that they are working well with local governments and stakeholders, but for some reason not Kings County," said Olivera. "We support the Kings County Board of Supervisors attempt to deal with the state's drive over their jurisdiction without regard to the impacts to the public in their jurisdiction. If the Authority cannot build this project in a legal and thoughtful manner, I suppose the project will need to be totally dismantled to allow a proper project to be built."

"It's a slap in the face when the (Authority) chairman commits to working with you and never returns your calls," said Fukuda.

CCHSRA is looking at its options, according to Fukuda, who said, "We're narrowing down toward litigation."

The City of Visalia initially expressed an interest in having a high-speed rail station somewhere along the Highway 99 corridor, where most people believed the rail route would be. After the new route was proposed, the City of Visalia stopped lobbying for the station and instead focused its efforts on a connection from the station to the city, according to Fukuda, who expressed disappointment that the city and Kings County are not working toward the same goal.

"If they just kept their mouth shut, it would have preserved our relationship," he said.

Fukuda raised his concerns about the funding for the proposed Kings County rail station. "There is a thought that local stations aren't going to be paid for by the High-Speed Rail Authority," he said. "If Hanford wants a station, Hanford is going to have to pay for it."

The Fresno-to-Bakersfield high-speed rail section is approximately 114 miles long, from south of the terminus of the Merced-to-Fresno project section to north of the City of Bakersfield. The preferred alternative is comprised of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe alternative, the Corcoran Bypass alternative, the Allensworth Bypass alternative and the Bakersfield Hybrid alternative. Proposed stations include the East of Hanford/West of Visalia Station Option located near Highway 198.

The Federal Railroad Administration will now consider approving the project and issuing a Record of Decision under the National Environmental Policy Act. A decision is expected in June.

The Final EIR/EIS and associated documents are available at www.hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Environmental_Planning/final_fresno_bakersfield.html.

For more information about Citizens for California High-Speed Rail Accountability, visit cchsra.org.

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- ★ Mike worked his way up through the ranks of the Sheriff's Department: Cadet, Deputy, Field Training Officer, Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Undersheriff, Acting Sheriff
- ★ Appointed Acting Sheriff by the Board of Supervisors last October
- ★ Master of Science degree in Administration and Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice
- ★ Graduate of FBI National Academy in Quantico and LAPD West Point Leadership Academy
- ★ Married to Angela, Father of Zachary, Natalie and Nathan

Join the Tulare County Deputy Sheriffs Association & Sheriff Bill Wittman in voting Mike Boudreaux for Tulare County Sheriff

Law Enforcement Overwhelmingly Trusts & Endorses Mike Boudreaux for Sheriff

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- ★ Bill Wittman, Tulare County Sheriff
- ★ Margaret Mims, Fresno County Sheriff
- ★ Cliff Bush, Exeter Police Chief
- ★ Mario Krstic, Farmersville Police Chief
- ★ Rich Wilkinson, Lindsay Police Chief
- ★ Tulare County Chief's Association
- ★ Professional Law Enforcement Managers Association
- ★ Dinuba Police Officers' Association
- ★ Exeter Police Officers' Association
- ★ Farmersville Police Officers' Association
- ★ Lindsay Public Safety Officers' Association
- ★ Porterville Police Officers' Association
- ★ Tulare City Professional Fire Fighters Association
- ★ Tulare County Professional Fire Fighters Association
- ★ California Correctional Peace Officers Association
- ★ California Narcotic Officers' Association
- ★ California Association of Highway Patrolman
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Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

Mendoza in November. Ms. Barajas, who has only managed to raise a paltry $600, courted the Central Valley Tea Party for their endorsement. "I have five or six very close friends in the Tea Party that support me," said Ms. Barajas, "but they weren't prepared to endorse anyone." The American Independent Party has endorsed Ms. Barajas.

Though Ms. Barajas seemed like the only viable threat to Mr. Mendoza last year, this year her campaign has lost momentum. The scuttlebutt is that Republican Ms. Andres was encouraged to file papers to dilute the Republican women's vote and derail Ms. Barajas' campaign. Conspiracy theories aside, it's hard to ignore the fact that Ms. Andres changed her affiliation from Democratic to Republican soon before declaring her candidacy. She also hasn't filed any financial papers with the Secretary of State. With no money, and fundamentally a Democrat, she is not "in to win it." So why did she file?

Most Republicans are going to cast their vote for the front runner, Mr. Mendoza, making second place fall to a Democrat. Of the three Democrats running for assembly, none of whom have raised any money, Mr. Jones is the only one to have held elected office. But he has gotten some negative press. In addition, California Democrats are not going to vote for anti-choice, anti-marriage rights candidates, which both Mr. Jones and Mr. Thomas are. Mr. Macareno is a meat-and-potatoes liberal and has racked up an impressive line of endorsements. He also gets exposure as the Chairman of the Tulare County Democratic Party.

Prediction: Rudy Mendoza 1st; Ruben Macareno 2nd by at least 25 points.

Tulare County Supervisor District 5

Candidates: Incumbent Mike Ennis, Virginia Gurrola, Felipe Martinez, and Greg Shelton. If no one receives 50% plus one, the top two vote-getters go on to the November general election.

Steve Worthley in District 4 has no challenger, which usually means that his constituents are pretty satisfied with his performance. On the other hand, Mr. Ennis has three challengers who do not think he is doing a very good job.

Most of our readers do not live, or vote, in District 5--but the winner of this race will make decisions that affect us all. Mr. Ennis' three challengers have served, or are currently serving, on the Porterville City Council. Ms. Gurrola and Mr. Martinez most likely will split the Latino vote, while and conservative Mr. Shelton looks like he might prevent Mr. Ennis from winning outright in June with 50% plus one. But unlike Mr. Ennis, Mr. Shelton hasn't raised any money. No money, no win.

The two main criticisms against Mr. Ennis are that he doesn't always respond to his constituents, which is true, and that he pays more attention to the unincorporated communities than to Porterville, which is also true. But who is going to stand up for communities like Tera Bella or Ducor and make sure they have parks and healthcare clinics? Porterville? No. Mr. Ennis stands up for those communities and takes pains to represent them as much as he represents Porterville. In general, things are going well in Tulare County and there are no hot-button issues that could derail Mr. Ennis campaign.

With four viable candidates, none is winning 50% percent plus one of the vote--so District 5 will have a run-off in November.

Prediction: Mike Ennis 1st; Greg Shelton 2nd.

State Controller

Candidates: There are six candidates running for Controller but only three are viable. Republican Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingen; Democrats State Assembly Speaker John Perez and Board of Equalization Member Betty Yee. The top two vote-getters will proceed to the November general election.

For being one of the more boring offices, this race certainly has attracted its share of characters. The Controller is the chief fiscal officer of California, which is the ninth-largest economy in the world. So it was amusing when the former State Senator Dean Florez was the frontrunner last year for "top bookkeeper" before he was slapped with California's largest fine ever for misusing campaign funds.

Then Fresno Mayor Swearingen burst onto the scene three days before the filing deadline. Mayor Swearingen is now coming in first in the polls in front of two well-known Democrats, State Assembly Speaker Perez and Board of Equalization Member Yee. She has also received the endorsement of the largest daily in California, the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as those of the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Bakersfield Californian*. Mayor Swearingen has done this with little money and no name recognition outside of the Central Valley. Mr. Perez trails in the polls behind both women but has raised $2.4 million to Ms. Yee's $752,000 and to Mayor Swearingen's approximately $250,000.

People who can't walk and chew gum at the same time are criticizing the Fresno Mayor for throwing her hat in the ring while also running the city. Conservatives, whose orbit is a bit closer to earth, are thrilled that a well-spoken and telegenic conservative has stepped up to the plate, finally.

The two strong Democratic candidates will split the liberal vote, and Mayor Swearengin will receive all the conservative votes. This may be the only race where the person who wins the primary will then lose in the general election. California is not going to elect a San Joaquin Valley Republican to any statewide office, no matter how tightly she embraces President Obama.

Prediction: Ashley Swearengin 1st; John Perez 2nd.

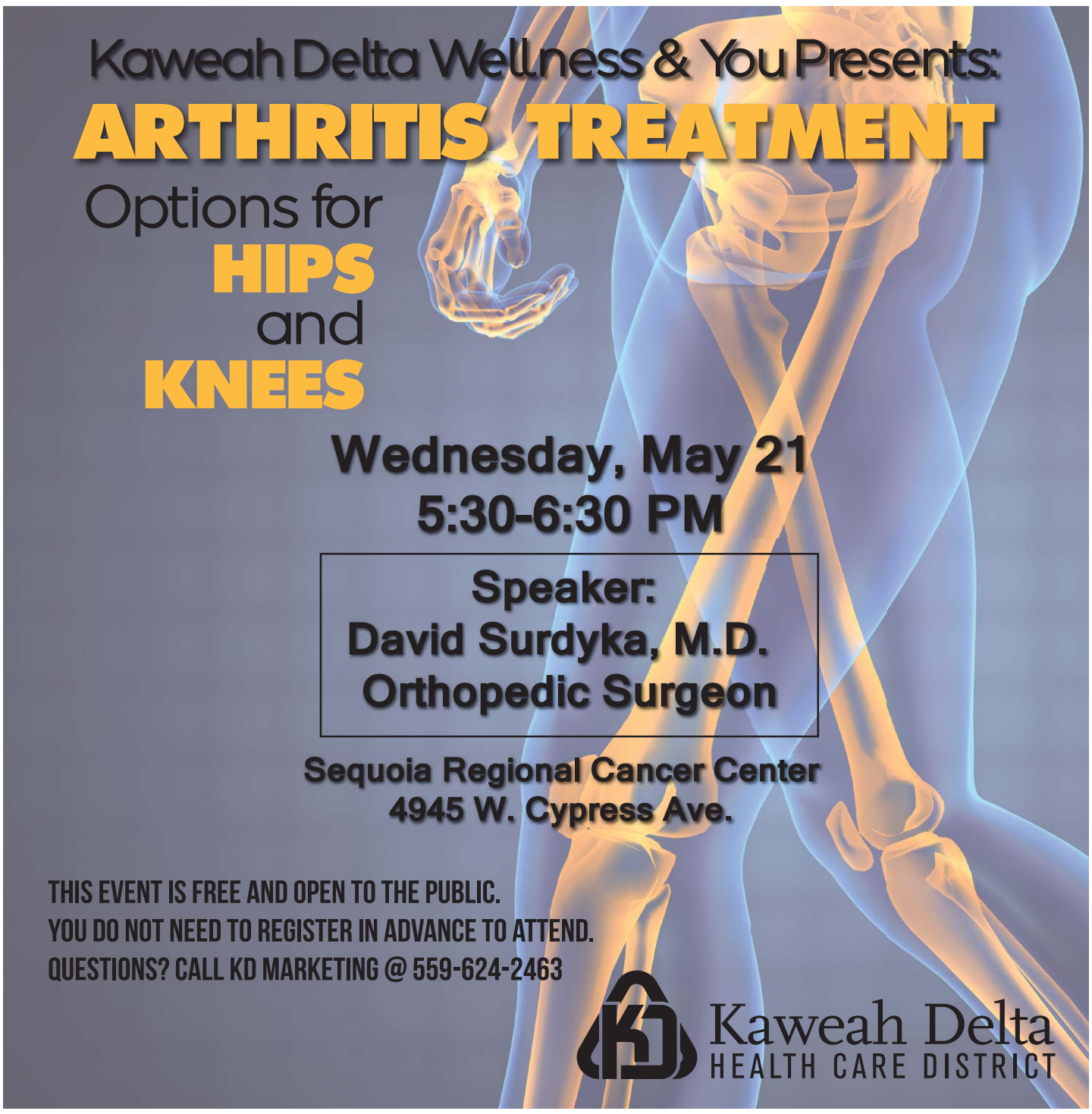
State Senate District 14

Candidates: Republican State Senator Andy Vidak; Democrat Fresno Unified School Board Trustee Luis Chavez.

About one third of Tulare County residents vote in this race, but because of redistricting it's confusing where that third lives. Don't count on Sen. Vidak or Board of Trustees Member Chavez clearing up the issue. Besides other problems with their websites, neither one of them even mentions District 14. Welcome to amateur hour.

Because there are only two candidates, both will advance to the general election. But this should be one of the hottest races after the primary. Both Sen. Vidak and Mr. Chavez have raised roughly the same amount of money, have about the same amount of experience and have the same lousy website. They have been in their respective offices about two years. Mr. Chavez has been on the Fresno Unified School District board since 2012, while Sen. Vidak has been a State Senator since 2013. Mr. Chavez is looking at a 14-point Democratic registration advantage, and 71% of the registered voters are Hispanic. But Sen. Vidak has the advantage of being the incumbent in a low-voter turnout election, and the public has so far been pleased with his performance.

Prediction: Andy Vidak 1st; Luis Chavez 2nd.



PC Opens Registration for Summer Program

Registration is now open for Porterville College Foundation's S.M.A.R.T. Lab (Science, Mathematics and Resource Technology) program. Multiple three-day sessions are being offered June 2-5 or 9-12, July 7-10 or 28-31. These sessions focus on life, physical and earth science for kids, grades 4-6.

June sessions will take place from 7:30am to 12:30pm. Cost is $20 and includes breakfast, lunch, T-shirt, materials, workbook and textbook of student's choice.

July sessions will take place from 8am to noon. Cost is $20 and includes mid-morning snack, T-shirt, materials, workbook and textbook of student's choice. A reduction in registration in both sessions is available as a result of a donation from the Edison International STEM Scholarship.

Registration has started in the PC Business Office, 100 E. College Ave. For more information, call 791-2319 or email cbodine@portervillecollege.edu.

Marijuana

Continued from p. 1

that was never resolved was how a small-time landlord is supposed to dig up 150 pot plants - without getting shot - and their proper method of disposal. A public hearing was scheduled for April 29th.

At the April 29th hearing, after Yang and the RMA testified, the supervisors went into closed session for ten minutes to deliberate. It seemed from her testimony and the questions asked that the supervisors might waive the fine, but to Yang's and the public's shock, the supervisors took a very aggressive stance. Their frustrations with the marijuana problem in Tulare County were, it seemed, to be projected on to the landlord. They also seemed openly hostile to the fact that she was challenging the fine. All four supervisors present, with Worthley absent on county business, wanted to delay their decision for two weeks to give the staff time to explore the possibility of imposing the maximum amount of fines. The maximum fine the supervisors wanted to impose was $1,000 a day from the time the county became aware of the plants and a fine for the fence. Supervisor Mike Ennis went so far as to inquire if they could impose a fine of $1,000 a plant--$150,000--that would have surely left Yang's family bankrupt. By the end of the hearing, our law-abiding hardworking mother of four was facing over $10,000 in fines. The final decision was scheduled to be announced at the supervisor's meeting on May 13th.

> *"I have no patience and no tolerance for people who grow pot illegally."*
>
> — Supervisor Mike Ennis

Tulare County Board of Supervisors (l-r): Mike Ennis, Allen Ishida, Steve Worthley, Phillip Cox, Pete Vander Poel. Far right: County Administrative Officer Jean Rousseau. Photo courtesy County of Tulare.

The same problems are brewing in Fresno County. In several cases, landlords have been held responsible for illegal marijuana gardens and fined exorbitant fees. Last summer, a landlord in Kerman notified the sheriff's office that his tenant was cultivating a cannabis patch on his property. The sheriff's department confronted the tenant, who subsequently removed the plants. In January, sheriff's deputies determined that the tenant had simply moved his marijuana garden inside the garage. The sheriff returned in February and removed the plants. Fresno County Supervisors levied a $30,000 fine to be split between the medical marijuana-growing tenant and the home's absentee owner, a resident of the Bay Area. The land owner appealed the decision and the supervisors voted that the tenant was responsible for 90% of the financial penalties -- $27,000. The property owner will face $3,000 in penalties.

> *"When the plants were harvested and hung out to dry, that became a huge public safety problem."*
>
> — Supervisor Allen Ishida

The fine in Fresno County for an illegal medical marijuana garden is $1,000 per plant. But to the chagrin of Supervisor Ennis, Tulare County had the foresight to know they could not enforce a $1,000-a-plant fine without incurring litigation for exorbitant fees. It was amended it to $1,000 a day.

Monique Yang's property, as seen from the road. Photo courtesy County of Tulare.

At the Tulare County Supervisors meeting on May 13th, supervisors voted 5-0 for the more lenient fine of $1724.91, but that was more than the landlord felt was fair. Why they voted for the smaller amount is a mystery because the supervisors made it clear they felt the landlord was at fault and should be made an example of. Supervisor Allen Ishida and Supervisor Ennis, whose districts feel the brunt of the crime wave attracted to illegal marijuana gardens, were visibly angry at Yang during their comment period. Ishida said the reason for his concern was public safety. The first homicide that happened at a medical marijuana grow site in Tulare County was only a half-mile from his house. Referring to Yang's rental, Ishida said, "When the plants were harvested and hung to dry that became a huge public safety problem." He said that if the supervisors had the power to seize personal property where marijuana is grown they would. Then the landlord would think the $10,000 fine is cheap compared to what they could, potentially, take.

Ennis was equally angry, saying that Tulare County has a lot of landlords from Los Angeles who get the letter from the RMA and come down and clean it up. Ennis continued that he doesn't think any of the cannabis being cultivated is for medical purposes but "just to pad the grower's pockets." He continued, "I have no patience and no tolerance for people who grow pot illegally."

Supervisor Steve Worthley mentioned that Fresno has it harder because the tenants move the plants indoors, making it very difficult to detect a marijuana garden. But in Tulare County it's not very hard to detect. An eight-foot-tall fence is built for one purpose, and one purpose only, to grow pot.

In an unexpected twist, the landlord introduced one of the tenants responsible for growing the marijuana garden. After she made her final statement, she brought him up to the lectern. Ishida, looking like he wanted to jump out of his chair and tackle the man, shot a hostile look and only managed to ask, "This is the man who planted the pot?"

When it was time to move to the next item, Supervisor Phil Cox told the tenant that he was truly lucky he was not leaving their chambers in handcuffs. The tenant, who only speaks Lao, looked around obliviously, then exited the room.

Martinez

Continued from p. 1

providing them an opportunity to receive work experience through scheduling appointments with constituents and assisting him in reaching out to the community.

"[Not] being able to communicate with your supervisor, that's the number one complaint that I've gotten," Martinez said. "In my line of work and what I do for a living, I meet with people at all times. I am a people person. I am a businessman that deals with people."

Through his work in the Porterville City Council and experience in working with Tulare County through the Step Up program, he says that the key to collaboration between the county and city – a working relationship that has been strained as of late – is to remember that each side should have its constituents' interests at heart, and to set other issues aside.

"We need to be able to work out the details and – in other words – we have to have really thick skin and a short memory," he said.

His other major concern is water, with a two-pronged approach: getting potable water to disadvantaged communities in his district and finding ways to cope with California's drought.

"The bond that will be coming up – and hopefully the state can decide on one of the bonds – will be looking at above-ground storage that will be captured when there is an excess amount to release when we need it," he said. "Conserve and re-use some of the water out for us to capture and re-use. We can have the cities themselves capture more water."

His top priority, however, is ensuring that the people of District 5 are adequately represented on the Board of Supervisors, and that their concerns are being conveyed.

"The first thing that people want to do is to be heard. Your concerns on any particular date at this particular moment may be the biggest concerns in your life," Martinez said. "You want your elected officials to listen to you, because to you it means life or death, to you it means being able to keep your house – it means a lot of things."

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Briefly...

Visalia Seeks Three New Planning Commissioners

Applications are now being accepted for three positions on the Visalia Planning Commission, which makes recommendations to the Visalia City Council concerning land use, building and subdivisions, administers the zoning ordinance and handles matters that affect the growth and development of the city. The commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7pm. Additional work sessions and meetings may be scheduled to address specific matters. This position requires the applicant to be a United States citizen and the filing of a Fair Political Practices Commission Conflict of Interest Form (Form 700).

Recruitment for the three positions will continue until June 6. Interviews, which are open to the public, are scheduled for Monday, June 23, beginning at 4pm. The city council will consider formally appointing the three planning commissioners at its first regular meeting in July for the term beginning September 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2016.

Applications are available at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, "Committees/Commissions" and will be accepted until 5pm on Friday, June 6, either by mail to 425 E. Oak Ave., Suite 301, Visalia, CA 93291; fax to 713-4800; or via email to Deputy City Clerk Michelle Nicholson at michelle.nicholson@ci.visalia.ca.us.

NRCS California Launches Air Quality Chipping Initiative

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California will assist farmers to chip woody debris in fallowed orchards and vineyards impacted by California's ongoing drought. The conservation benefits associated with this practice include controlling erosion and protecting air quality.

"NRCS is committed to helping farmers and ranchers manage the impacts of California's drought," said Carlos Suarez, NRCS California state conservationist. "This initiative builds upon the $25 million we have already invested this fiscal year to apply on-farm water conservation measures across the state."

Chipping the woody debris in lieu of burning will avoid smoke emissions created from agricultural burning, reducing ozone precursors and particulate matter emissions, and reducing smoke impacts downwind. Applying the chipped debris to the fallowed orchard or vineyard land stabilizes the surface area to limit fugitive dust emissions due to wind erosion and helps improve soil health by increasing soil carbon, organic matter and water retention. The wood chips may also be hauled away to a nearby composting facility or to a biomass-fueled power plant where the chips are consumed as renewable fuel for producing electricity.

Farmers in Fresno, Kings, Kern, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare counties have until June 20 to apply. For additional information, eligible farmers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. Service center locations can be found at www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov.

Valley Commerce Bancorp Announces Dividends

Walter A. Dwelle, chairman of the board of Valley Commerce Bancorp, announced at the 2014 annual shareholders' meeting held April 29th in Visalia that the company's board of directors authorized a cash dividend of eight cents per share. The dividend is payable to common shareholders of record on June 5, 2014, and is to be distributed on or about June 26, 2014. The total amount of the cash dividend will be approximately $223,000. Dwelle noted that the dividend represented a 33% increase from the first quarter 2014 dividend, and added that the board will consider future cash dividends following the end of each calendar quarter.

In addition, Dwelle announced shareholders of record as of June 5, 2014, would receive a 5% stock dividend to be issued on or about June 26, 2014. He also announced that the board authorized a stock repurchase program that allows up to $3 million of the company's common stock to be repurchased in the open market or through privately negotiated transactions over the coming 12 months.

For more information, visit www.valleybusinessbank.net.

Visalia Transit Launches 2014 Dare to Spare Challenge

According to the 2014 State of the Air Report released by the American Lung Association, Visalia and the surrounding area was recently named the second most polluted city in the U.S. In an effort to raise awareness about the poor air quality in the city, Visalia Transit Division has announced the commencement of the 2014 Dare to Spare Challenge.

Now through May 31, members of the community are invited to help change the air quality by riding public transit. The Dare to Spare Challenge is similar to a scavenger hunt, wherein riders aim to collect various keywords strategically placed throughout the bus fleet. Once each keyword is found, participant's text the keyword found in the bus to a designated number. For every keyword found, riders will be entered into a drawing for an iPad Mini. So, the more routes riders use, the higher their chances are for winning the prize.

Tulare Regional Medical Center Receives State Recognition

Tulare Regional Medical Center was recognized for complete recording of birth certificate data by the California Department of Vital Records. Vital Records requires recording of 14 critical values, including date of mother's first prenatal visit to fetal presentation at birth. The 14 critical values are used to predict and prevent childhood health risks. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) sets a standard for reporting missing values, based on the percentages reported nationally. California presents awards to hospitals for complete recording of birth certificate data if the hospital is at or below the state average for all 14 items.

The award was presented to Health Information Management Employees Maria Gargano and Brenda Perez. Gargano has been employed in the Health Information Management Department for nearly ten years and Perez for just under two years.

"This is another example of Tulare Regional Medical Center employee's commitment to quality," said Tony Jones, chief restructuring officer.

Tulare County Youth Honored at Red Carpet Event

Hundreds of Tulare County middle and high school students were honored during a red carpet event for community service projects they conducted as part of the Step Up Youth Challenge.

The Step Up Youth Challenge is a seven-month program designed to engage a diverse group of junior high and high school students in a service learning-based project that impacts their school culture and community. Program participants were honored at the Youth Challenge Red Carpet event on May 8 at the Visalia Fox Theatre. The Red Carpet event featured a deejay, dance troop, vocal performances and an Academy Awards-like ceremony.

This year, projects ranged from clothing donations to the homeless and creating community gardens to healthy eating campaigns and campaigns against hunger. For example, Mission Oak High School students in Tulare created a campaign called "Harvesting Hope," which aimed to fight hunger.

"I could not be more proud of the students and the service learning projects they have completed," said Phil Cox, chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. "We hope these students will continue to be great assets to their respective communities."

Local High School Students to Get Unique Look at U.S. Naval Academy

Breanna Lanice Jackson, a student at Tulare Union High School in Tulare, will participate in the 2014 U.S. Naval Academy Summer Seminar program, a fast-paced leadership experience for high school seniors.

Summer Seminar teaches prospective applicants about life at the Naval Academy, where academics, athletics and professional training are key elements in developing our nation's leaders.

Tulare County History Day Participants Selected as Finalists at State Competition

Three National History Day-Tulare County (NHD) projects were selected as finalists in the National History Day-California competition held April 25-27 in Riverside. The Tulare County projects were: "Equality," a two-dimensional display by Alexa Valdez and Ayana Lopez, fourth-grade students in the Dinuba GATE Program; "Roe v. Wade: Norma McCorvey's Change of Heart," a junior group documentary by Lexe Cortez, Callie Mueller and Mackenzie Williams, sixth-grade students at Sequoia Union School District; and "Rosies in World War II: How Women's Rights were Transformed as a Result of Fulfilling Their Patriotic Responsibility," an individual performance by Morgan Waldner, an eighth-grade student at Kings River Union School District.

The theme of NHD was "Rights and Responsibilities in History." Students developed projects relating to the national theme by incorporating events in local, state, national and international history. The projects ranged from performances and exhibits to website development and documentaries. A total of 23 Tulare County projects were eligible to compete in National History Day–California.

George Ouzounian Named Cemetery Trustee of the Year

George Ouzounian, trustee for the Visalia Cemetery District, was named Trustee of the Year at the recent 56th Annual Conference of the California Association of Public Cemeteries held in Oxnard. The award is given for commitment of time and energy in working with others to improve and enhance their district.

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The information in this report is deemed to be reliable, but cannot be guaranteed. This condition applies generally throughout the report and specifically to square footage calculations.

Oval Park

Continued from p. 1

which he believes have a negative impact on the neighborhood. He noted that a nearby historic home, built in 1905, was just put on the market for less than $80,000 – an indication of the problem he wants to solve.

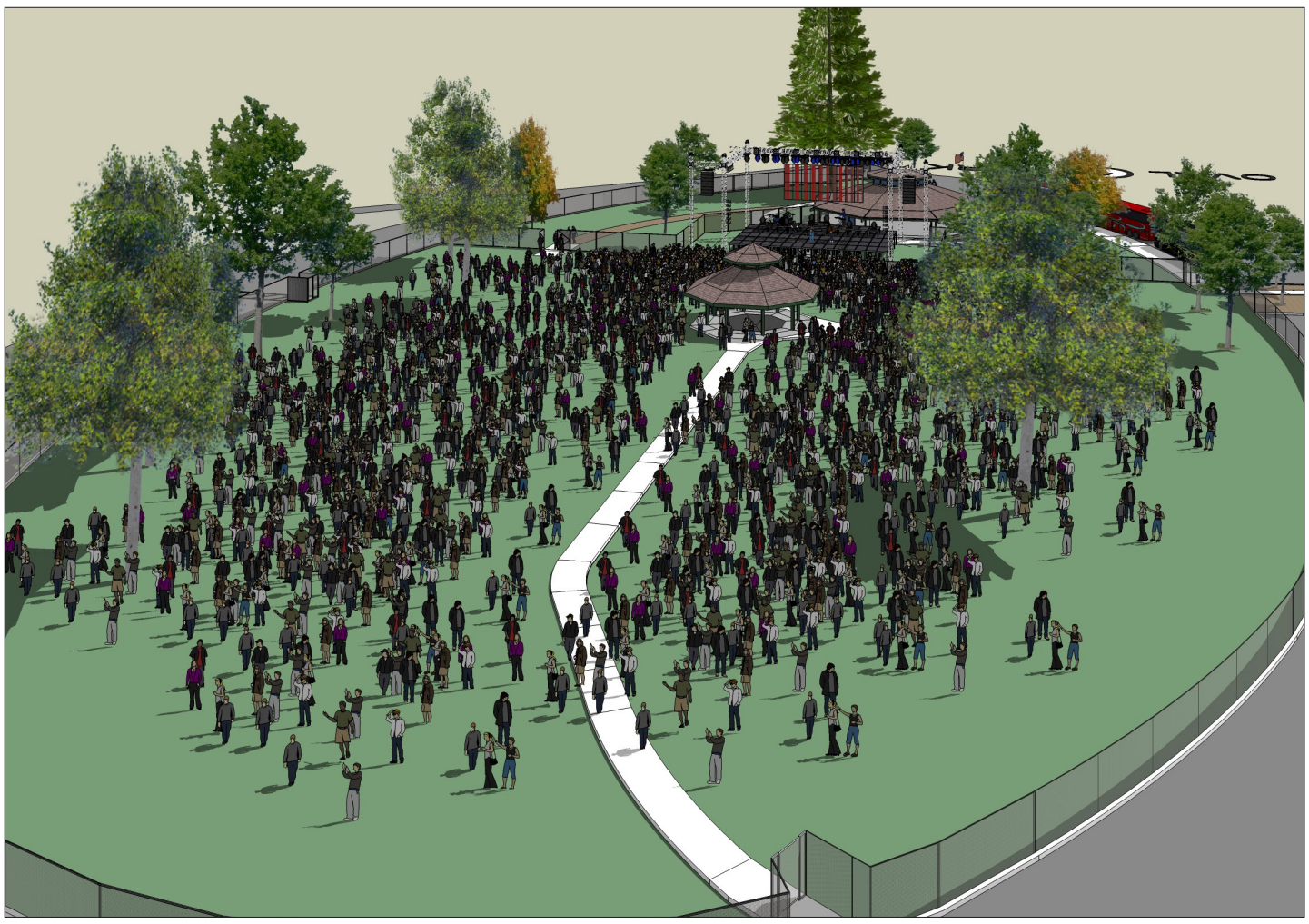
"A good park radiates value to the surrounding neighborhood," Stillwater said, citing studies by the American Planning Association that show success other cities have had in economic development in the areas near revitalized city parks that are now used for arts and cultural events. "We're not the only city facing problems like this," he said, adding that he wants to follow the lead of cities such as St. Petersburg, Florida, which have had success in this area.

"For this neighborhood, Oval Park is its biggest asset," Stillwater said, adding that people aren't making full use of it. "All these families walk in for an Easter egg hunt and leave right after," he said. "There's something wrong with this picture. Kids play catch in their small backyards when there's this park nearby. Perception is the biggest enemy, that you'll step on a needle or be accosted or propositioned."

"Oval Park has a rich history," said Visalia City Manager Mike Olmos. "It's one of the core areas of the original city and it retains a lot of the original charm. It's probably the oldest park in the city, and it has had some struggles in more recent years – homelessness, gangs. The city has put a lot of resources in the area to deal with these things."

In 2009, the City of Visalia received a $135,000 Environmental Justice Context Sensitive Planning Grant from Caltrans to evaluate traffic and pedestrian conditions and recommendations for improvements in the Lincoln Oval Park area. Caltrans also committed to contributing at least $200,000, and the city was awarded a $500,000 grant from the FHWA Highway Safety Improvement Program for improvements in this area.

Also that year, with a combination of Community Development Block Grant funds, Prop 40 State Park Grant Funds and a State Conservation Grant – a total of $435,000 – nearby Village Park and the interior of the Wittman Center were renovated. The old playground was replaced as part of the renovation and other improvements included a new irrigation system, shrubs and trees, turf, basketball surface and hoops, park security lighting, a water fountain and fencing and gates.



An artist's rendering of what a renovated Oval Park might look like. Photo courtesy the City of Visalia.

Using Community Development Block Grant funds and a $69,854 grant from Southern California Edison, the city installed solar-powered LED street lights in Oval Park in May 2012. In addition, the city leases Wittman Center to Proteus and pays about $100,000 annually to operate it. The city also maintains the adjacent park, which includes basketball courts, turfed area and park playground.

"The city has made a very big effort there and we continue to support the park by making improvements and applying for grants," Olmos added, noting the city's recent application for a $181,000 Department of Housing grant. "We don't know if we'll get that or any of it, but we will know by June."

Stillwater looks forward to proposed Oval Park upgrades, such as a walking path around the perimeter, increased lighting and security cameras, a fence on the east side, a new playground and an amphitheater.

"The city is supporting Ryan and the Rescue Mission in this effort," said Olmos, adding that the city has worked to get Calrans to close State Highway 63 and reroute traffic during the August 29 concert. "It's the first time in the city there's ever been a venue as big as the park."

Last year, the city gave the Visalia Rescue Mission access to the community center in Oval Park to provide services and events.

"It's important for the city for every park to be vibrant," Olmos added. "We have 50 parks in the city and every one is important."

When Stillwater used his reputation as a concert promoter to get Frampton and Guy to headline the August 29 concert at Oval Park, the choice of venue surprised many Visalians.

"It's unorthodox, but not unheard of," said Stillwater, who acknowledged that the park does not have its own stage, sound equipment or concert lighting. "I worked with (Frampton and Guy) before and they know I have the experience to execute an event of this size."

Other Oval Park events are currently in the planning stages, such as an opera and a night of worship, but so far, no events specifically target the local Hispanic community.

"It's not that we're avoiding doing them; we're going to do shows for the community at large," Stilllwater explained. "There hasn't been enough done to kick the engine over, to get people thinking differently about the park."

The Indiegogo campaign, which will run until June 9th, has a financial goal of raising $5,000, according to Stillwater. For $5, contributors will receive a new Oval Park Compilation featuring 10 songs from Visalia singer/songwriters. For $10, donors receive an Oval Park t-shirt. An Oval Park hat is the reward for a $20 contribution, and $25 donors receive all three of these items. Show sponsors ($1,000) and "Park Revitalizers" ($5,000) receive tickets, recognition and other perks.

For more information about the park or the campaign, visit www.ovalpark.org.

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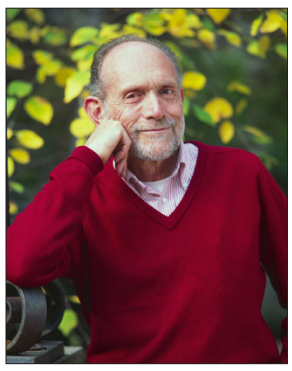
Viewpoint

Imagining the 'Unimaginable'

Michael N. Nagler



Last week, the quiet town of Waseca, Minnesota, narrowly avoided becoming "one more in a long list of school shootings." (I will come back to this language of the CNN report.) A boy, 17 years old, had plotted to kill his family and bomb the town's junior and senior high school, to "kill as many students as possible" and then be killed by a SWAT-team. Thank God a neighbor caught on to his suspicious behavior and called the police. It turns out he had already planted a couple of crude bombs in neighborhood playgrounds that, by grace or good fortune, did not go off.

Throughout the coverage of the boy's nick-of-time arrest the expression used by one police officer became a refrain: we have averted an "unimaginable tragedy." But the problem is, it was all too imaginable.

Teenagers in particular – though not they alone – spend more hours consuming media than they ever did in school, more than they spend hanging out with friends or in any kind of human interaction. This would be harmful even if the content of those media were not so disturbing, so damaging to the human image. The choice seems to be violence, sex or both (and sex, the loveless way that it's presented in most of these formats, is just another form of violence). By contrast, most examples of a potentially uplifting alternative, where human beings are presented with dignity and their connectedness acknowledged – the would-have-been reality check on all this alienating stuff – are sappy and unrealistic.

This is new in human evolution. Our ancestors would sometimes listen to war epics at an annual festival, but we are putting the fire of artless violence in our minds upwards of five hours a day.

Once we've made violence imaginable, and for some an idée fixe, which at some point they can't help acting out, we also make sure the tools of violence are readily available. Anyone can earn how to make a bomb on the internet; we have become a nation armed against itself, full of people who harbor weapons in a desperate attempt to find some meaning and some security – which, as we almost saw yet again last week in Minnesota, has the opposite effect.

And so for this 17-year-old, who idolized the mass murderers of Virginia Tech, Columbine and Newtown, such violence was all too imaginable. And for how many others? In a nation where CNN can almost off-handedly refer to "one more in a long list of school shootings," how can children feel safe in their schools? And if they cannot feel safe, how can they learn?

On the whole, I think we would almost be better off not even hearing about those massacres; but that is not what I'm advocating. Of course, we have to read about these horrors; but we also have to learn from them. And from the relentless scientific studies that show how media violence and, for that matter, the mere image of weapons, makes people more aggressive. And, for that matter, from our own experiences.

When I was very young, and had already seen my share of cowboy and gangster movies, I had a bad dream one night that I was being chased by a fiendish giant. But I somehow had a gun, and turning around I frantically pulled the trigger. Nothing. Click, click. It was a dud. At that point I woke up, but I remember to this day how I would have given anything in that dream moment for a gun that worked. So I sympathize with the fears of gun owners, and I can sympathize with the hunger of television and movie viewers, with video game players who may be seeking some excitement from the drab realities of everyday life for giving themselves the feeling that violence will make them strong and protected.

But the difference is, I woke up. I call out to gun lobbyists and gun buyers, to movie producers and viewers of media where the human image is degraded and mayhem extolled, to wake up from their nightmarish fascination with violence.

Maybe a kind of awakening is beginning. Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is setting up a $50 million fund to counteract some of the political muscle of the NRA, which is an interesting first step. But most politicians, when in office, are apparently unprepared to listen to this kind of reason. When that happens it is opportune to start small – simply don't expose yourself to violent media and try to live in trust instead of fear. We make a difference as individuals, and we must make our difference in the right direction.

Michael N. Nagler writes for PeaceVoice, is professor emeritus at UC Berkeley, and president of the Metta Center for Nonviolence. His latest book, The Nonviolence Handbook, *is available from Berrett-Koehler publishers, San Francisco.*

May is National Month to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Supervisor Phil Cox

The past five years in Tulare County have brought positive changes in how we educate our teens. The vast majority of public schools have adopted some form of comprehensive sex education curriculum that empowers teens to recognize the importance of healthy relationships.. True progress will be seen when every school board enacts policy changes that require this instruction for students.

Tulare County ranks second in California in the number of births to teens. Though teen birth rates have come down by as much as 9% since 2010, more can be done.

May 7 was the 13th Annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. All of May is Prevent Teen Pregnancy Month, and the purpose is straightforward. Too many teens still think "It can't happen to me." The national day helps teens understand that it can, and that they need to think seriously about what they would do in the moment.

To coincide with Prevention of Teen Pregnancy month, Supervisor Phil Cox has written the following viewpoint.

Each year a report is generated by the State of California that ranks from highest to lowest the counties birth rate for births to teenage mothers. I am glad to say that we are not on the top of that list this year; we are second. Although the number of babies being born to teenagers has declined over the past few years, it is still way too many. There are several costs associated with these children having children. For example, teen women who become mothers tend to exhibit poorer psychological functioning, lower levels of educational attainment, more single parenthood and less stable employment than do those with similar backgrounds who postpone childbirth. They also have more pregnancy problems and their babies have several more health issues.

These teenagers are having their childhood stolen from them. They are forced to grow up fast and have to make decisions I found difficult as a 22-year-old young adult. One key principle we can work on is education. We need to speak openly with our youth about the consequences of being sexually active at an early age. It is normal for a young man or woman to have these types of feelings for the opposite sex. They need to be taught that it is normal to have these feelings, but they need to hold off on acting out until they are mature enough and prepared to act responsibly.

If there would have been an adult standing out there at the "Y" with us on those hot summer days, I doubt that any of us would have taken such dangerous risks. The youth who are right now standing at the "Y" in their life need an adult standing right beside them listening and teaching about the dangers of being sexually active at too early of an age. Please be that adult in a young person's life.

Phil Cox is chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

It breaks my heart when I see a news report about some young person who loses their life while swimming in a lake or canal. I think back to the time when I was a teenager growing up here in Tulare County and how hot it was during the summer months. We would go out to a place we called the "Y" and swim for hours after work. This was a place where three canals came together in one location and had large underground steel gates that you could close off or open to allow the water to go into another canal. To say that we were impulsive and stared danger in the face is an understatement. We would swim up to the gate and let the current drag us under and through to the other side not knowing if the gate was fully open or not. We acted on impulse and were reckless. Not caring what the outcome was, we were just looking for a fun time.

Our young people today are still swimming in dangerous waters. They are still impulsive and at times reluctant to listen to reason when it comes to their personal health and safety.

VUSD Graduation Rates Up Again!

Craig Wheaton, Ed.D.

This is the time of year that we love to celebrate! Students are trying on their caps and gowns and hoping their friends and relatives are shopping for graduation gifts. In all seriousness, it is a time when friends and family gather to honor the accomplishments of our students. Middle school students spend the last day of school in a promotion ceremony to mark the passage from middle school to high school, one more step in the journey toward a high school diploma. And for high school, we have a full week of high school graduations. Thousands join our graduates under the stadium lights to commemorate their achievement.

Graduation, a high school diploma, is an important first step in life. It is that first door that can open unlimited possibilities of success. We know that across the nation many students do not graduate from high school, in some places as many as 50%. In Visalia Unified, we have worked hard over the years to make sure that every student has that possibility. We are determined to fill our stadiums with graduates, and that number has continued to grow over the years.

Since 2008, we have increased our graduation rate by over 10%. In fact, just last month the California Department of Education released the most recent graduation rates, and Visalia Unified's is at a two-decade high--88.3%. This continued increase is a result of the hard work of teachers and administrators throughout the district by providing excellent instruction, motivating students to learn, and, frankly, just not giving up on students.

This hard work is clear in our continued improvement in all areas of student achievement; it is not just more students completing their high school diploma. According to our state test results, we can see that students have continued to improve in every subject area. More students are at grade-level or well above grade-level than ever before!

What does all that mean for our 2014 graduates? No matter what they do, the 2014 graduates are better prepared than those in prior years. All the talk about numbers simply means students are better prepared for whatever they choose for their future.

The 2013-2014 school year has proven to be another outstanding year. So, let's head to the stadium and show our graduates how proud we all are of what they have accomplished! At the same time, turn to one of our talented and caring VUSD teachers and support staff and give them a big "thank you" for all they do!

Craig Wheaton, Ed.D., is superintendent of the Visalia Unified School District.

Columns & Letters

Letter: Write-in Zapalac

Welcome to the latest dog and pony show – the race for Tulare County Sheriff. We have a small war going on between "The Keystone Kops" (aka Sheriff Whaley, et al.) on the one hand, and "Deputy Dawg" (aka Sheriff Beaudroix, et al.) on the other hand – or it could be the other way around, the roles are interchangeable.

The accusations and counter-accusations are endless and absurd. Each sheriff sees himself as "wearing the white hat". In reality, though, neither does. Both sheriffs are part of the "Good Ole Boy Network" that Tulare County is famous – or infamous for -- depending on one's point of view. They were involved together in everything that has gone on in the Sheriff's office for years – they may be fighting now since they are competitors for the same job but never doubt that they are both cut from the same bolt of cloth.

This race is both a farce and a tragedy. However, I believe that electing either of these gentlemen would be a serious mistake for the citizens of Tulare County and the Sheriff's Department, itself, we deserve better.

But, there just might be another possibility. We could wage a serious WRITE-IN campaign. With a viable candidate, we could be successful, or at the very least, have a real impact on the race and its outcome.

To my mind, the only person who could come in and bring peace to the Department, is John Zapalac. Just think, if those of us who voted for John in the last election –that would be more than 15,000 – what an impact that would have on this race. John served 18 years in the sheriff's office; he understands the department and the politics of it, and is, most importantly, a man of integrity.

Just think, a win-win situation – the Sheriff's Department gets a new chief, free from the influence of " The Good Ole Boy Network" and Tulare County gets a new chief worthy of representing the county.

So, I hope that you will join me in exercising your constitutional right – and in the grand old American tradition --

WRITE IN 'JOHN ZAPALAC FOR SHERIFF' in the upcoming June primary.

Just think, our little Tulare County waging a serious Write –In campaign – what a great thought!

Barbara Waldron
Exeter, CA

Letter: Vote Kaelble

In a recent candidate forum that took place in Porterville, the current District Attorney, Tim Ward, trivialized law enforcement officers throughout the county.

Mr. Ward stated that the seven local law enforcement officer associations who endorsed Ralph F. Kaelble for District Attorney did so simply because under Tim's watch, the DA's office had to bring charges against a few officers. This statement is absolutely ludicrous, as our local law enforcement officers are committed to seeking justice and upholding the law, no matter what. If an officer commits a crime, other officers want that person prosecuted because he or she makes the honest and hardworking officers look bad. They would not retaliate against the DA for doing his job.

Furthermore, Mr. Ward whined that these associations had boards of representatives vote to endorse Mr. Kaelble, and that it was not reflective of the entire association. This statement is comical because Mr. Ward spoke in front of the same association board members and asked them to endorse him. They chose not to, and now he is bitter. All of the local associations chose Mr. Kaelble, so Mr. Ward is trying to minimize the importance of these endorsements. Some associations opened voting to all members, and Mr. Kaelble still won.

Mr. Ward is proud of the fact and quick to note that the Tulare County Board of Supervisors has endorsed him. A board that is comprised of elected officials. How are the associations' boards any different? The only difference is that Mr. Kaelble was not given the opportunity to speak to the Board of Supervisors.

Although I am not a member of any of these associations (did I mention Mr. Ward repeatedly called them unions in an effort to evoke negative emotions from conservative Tulare County voters?), I witnessed Mr. Ward's comments and was deeply offended and appalled on behalf on the hard-working law enforcement officers who just want to do the right thing.

We do not support negative political agendas that strike out against the candidate's family members and don't believe that this behavior should tolerated by voters. The firing of 15 year Tulare County ADA veteran Afreen Kaelble, Ralph Kaelble's wife hit below the belt.

I will be the first in line to show Mr. Ward how I feel about his comments on Election Day.

Robert & Lynn Lassotovitch

Online Comments

Comment at ourvalleyvoice.com or fb.me/ourvalleyvoice

"Re: Orosi Candidates' forum (4-4-14 edition). Ms. Castillo's comment in reference to the candidates;"You can tell who spoke from the heart and who was a politician." I really don't "get it". Aren't ALL candidates for political office vying to become a POLITICIAN? So then, why is there the inference that being a politician a four-letter word? If this candidate's forum was supposed to be a politically-neutral venue- then why the thinly-disguised sarcasm of the organizer?"

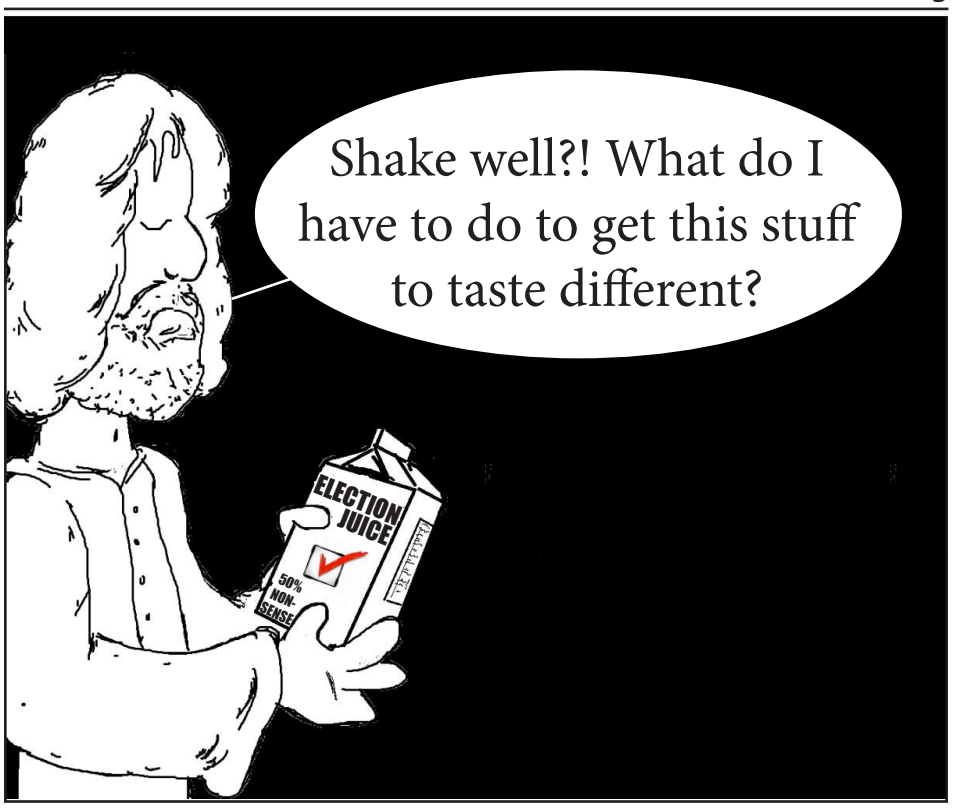
— Donna L. Clemons, on 3 April Political Fix

"It should be of no surprise to anyone that the county attorneys would seek to cover up these crimes rather than follow the law. Tulare County is systemically corrupt. Unfortunately, the AG's office is part if that corruption. There needs to be a truly independent investigation of these crimes; not the DA having COS math department pretend to okay the odds calcs (which are CLEARLY not legitimate). To me, this now becomes a wider conspiracy than just the gun raffle. Tulare County's own Benghazi."

— Ronald Pierce, on D.A. Decides Not to Pursue Gun Raffle

Black Tie

Alex Oldenbourg



Veteran's Corner

"Aid and Attendance" Benefit

Joe Wright

Aid and Attendance is a special monthly pension benefit available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans who have in-home care, or who live in nursing homes or assisted-living facilities. The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment.

For a wartime veteran or surviving spouse to qualify for this special monthly pension, the veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Wartime veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, (October 16, 1981, for officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were ordered to active duty.

If all requirements are met, the VA determines eligibility for the Aid and Attendance benefit by adjusting for un-reimbursed medical expenses from the veteran's or surviving spouse's total household income. If the remaining income amount falls below the annual income threshold for the Aid and Attendance benefit, the VA pays the difference between the claimant's household income and the Aid and Attendance threshold. Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

"Happy to finally see those nice bright yellow boxes that I can get the *Valley Voice* with out going into a eating place only. The one on the Youngs parking lot as well as the service station on Akers. The only that is missing your contact phone number in the box that says Published by the *Valley Voice* LLC"

— John K.

"Dave you are such a hypocrite. Why don't you tell everyone about your high morality of using the department plane for personal use? Why don't you tell the people about you stopping a criminal investigation on your son and then an internal investigation until he got hired on with another agency? You sit there and throw accusations like spaghetti hoping something sticks. You are definately from the good ole boy Wiley days and you know it. Your like a time bomb waiting to go off. You have no business running for sheriff that's why Sheriff Wittman told you to retire. Funny all the misfits that you have tried firing for years are the only ones supporting you. Reminds me of another candidate four years ago."

— Travis Hilk, on Whaley Responds to Case Dismissal

(L-R) **ALLAN W. STONE** - President and CEO
WALTER A. DWELLE - Chairman of the Board

Attention Shareholders

of

Valley Commerce Bancorp

parent company of Valley Business Bank

The value of your investment continues to grow! After a third consecutive year of record profits, the following benefits of owning Valley Commerce Bancorp stock were announced at the 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders:

2013

A "SUPER PREMIER" performing bank – the Findley Reports

- **Quarterly cash dividend increased to $.08 per common share (a 33% increase)**
- **Stock dividend equal to 5% of common shares to be issued**
- **Stock repurchase program reauthorized for $3 million**

And 2014 is off to a great start! Persons interested in acquiring shares of Valley Commerce Bancorp common stock (OTCBB: VCBP), please call us at 559.429.7513.

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Kiwanis to Present Farmersville's 60th Diamond Anniversary Memorial Day Parade

The Farmersville Memorial Day Parade traditionally features a variety of entries.

Staff Reports

The Kiwanis Club of Farmersville, with the support of the City of Farmersville and members of the community, will be sponsoring Farmersville's 60th Diamond Anniversary Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26.

This is the only Memorial Day parade held in Tulare County and is the longest-running event in the city. In fact, it has been around longer than Farmersville has been a city. The parade, which features 80 entries, starts at 10am and normally lasts an hour.

The parade will run west on Visalia Road to Farmersville Boulevard, turning right and continuing north on Farmersville Boulevard to Front Street. Trophies will be awarded for first and second place in various categories as well as a Sweepstakes Trophy for the best entry. The trophies will be presented at the location of the judges' stand in front of the La Mueblería El Alto Furniture Store, at the corner of Farmersville Boulevard and Ash Street, immediately following the parade.

Members of the parade committee will sell raffle tickets along the route to offset the cost of trophies. Raffle prizes are donated by many of the community merchants. Winners of raffle prizes will be announced at the end of the parade.

Even though Farmersville is a small city, residents still feel that same great pride in our country as the bigger cities. For many, the Memorial Day Parade is a special family event and a wonderful way to honor our veterans.

Those interested in placing an entry in the Parade should contact the Farmersville Memorial Day Parade Committee at P.O. Box 244, Farmersville, CA 93223, or at phenryboyer@yahoo.com. For more information, call 731-9774.

Art Used to Reduce Stigma of Mental Illness in Tulare County

Tulare County Office of Education

Woodlake Union High School junior Natalia Frias is in her art class working on a painting of a girl. The girl is "an average girl, an odd girl," says Natalia. "She has problems connecting with others, so she turns to social media." In the painting, the girl is crying out, the computer mouse is wrapped around her and hateful sayings cover the background. Natalia explains that her painting represents the common occurrence of cyberbullying. "Looking for connections online can sometimes be the opposite of what you want," Natalia says. "Kids say hurtful things about others that they might not say in public."

Woodlake student Natalia Frias works on her painting of a girl who is the victim of cyberbullying. Photo courtesy of the Tulare County Office of Education.

Natalia chose to depict cyberbullying in her art piece as part of a program called RESTATE. For the past three semesters, nearly 500 high school students in Tulare and Kings counties have participated in the RESTATE program, which was created by the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to reduce the stigma of mental illness. The CHOICES Prevention Programs has administered the program at ten high schools.

Now in the final semester of the grant provided by HHSA, RESTATE includes a mental health curriculum that

ART/HEALTH continued on **24 »**

"I'll Stand Up" by Andrew Horn and Mary Turner, Violet Heintz Education Academy, Fresno

Visalia Fox to Host 11th Annual Slick Rock Student Film Festival May 17

Staff Reports

The 11th Annual Slick Rock Student Film Festival – Central California's largest student film competition – is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, at the Fox Theatre in Downtown Visalia. This year, the festival received more than 400 film entries.

The high school films receiving a "Premiere Cut" designation will be screened continuously at the theater beginning at 9am Saturday morning until about 4pm. A screening schedule is available at www.SlickRockFestival.org.

At 5pm, students who participated in the RESTATE Program this semester will hold an art exhibition on Encina Street. RESTATE, which was created by Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to reduce the stigma of mental illness, has been implemented by the Tulare County Office of Education's CHOICES Prevention Programs program in ten Tulare and Kings county high schools. RESTATE students will exhibit artworks to promote awareness and understanding of the mental health issues students, their friends and families may face.

At 5:30pm, students who played a central role in producing Slick Rock "Premiere Cut" films (along with their advisors) are eligible to participate in the Limo/Red Carpet Walk. The awards ceremony will begin at 7pm. The public is welcome to attend the screenings and the awards ceremony at no cost.

Middle and high school students in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare were eligible to compete in the festival. Middle school students could enter films in seven categories, while high school students (grades 9-12), had a choice of 14 categories. For a list of competition categories, visit www.SlickRockFestival.org.

"We are delighted that participation in the Slick Rock Film Festival continues to grow," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "Through Slick Rock, students are gaining the 21st Century learning skills they will need for success in college and the workplace."

Slick Rock is generously supported by the Tulare & Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force, the Tulare County Film Commission, Tulare County Step Up Initiative, and ABC30. For more information, visit www.SlickRockFestival.org or call CHOICES Prevention Programs at 651-0155.

JugFest 2014 Set for May 31 at Plaza Park

Staff Reports

Momentum Broadcasting's KJUG 106.7 FM will host JugFest, the Central Valley's largest country music festival, on Saturday, May 31, gates open at 1pm, show starts at 3pm and runs until – 10pm at Plaza Park in Visalia.

Justin Moore

In its eighth year, the free country music festival is boasting the best lineup in its history.

KJUG has secured Justin Moore as the headliner. Moore has charted the *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs eight times, and was recently named the 2014 New Artist of the Year at the American County Music Awards.

The lineup also includes American country singers Collin Raye, who has topped the Hot Country charts three times with a dozen Top Five hits, and Frankie Ballard, who won the title of Kenny Chesney's Next Big Star in 2008. Jamie Lynn Spears, whose new EP, *The Journey*, debuts on May 27, and John King, who recently came out with his first single, will also be performing.

JUGFEST continued on **24 »**

Downtown Visalia Car Show Offers Full Day of Events

Staff Reports

The 26th Annual Visalia Breakfast Lions Downtown Visalia Car Show will be held on Main Street from 9:30am to 3:30pm on Saturday, May 17th. Presented by Visalia Breakfast Lions Club, Groppetti Automotive and Budweiser, this event is open to the public and admission is free.

More than 300 cars were on display in last year's show.

In addition to a variety of classic cars to check out, there will be a pancake breakfast presented by Boy Scouts Troop 310 (7:30-10am), street vendors, a blood drive (10am-3pm), RC cars for the kids to test drive, local high school bands performing and more. Cruise Night begins at the Downtown A&W, 301 N. Willis, at 5pm, and features live music.

Registration to have a vehicle in the show is $30. Vehicle awards will be given for Best In Show, Paint, Interior, Engine, Modified and Original Appearing Vehicle. To register, visit www.Visaliabreakfastlions.org or call 697-3762.

All proceeds from the show go to Visalia Breakfast Lions Charities, which benefits such organizations as Wounded Warriors, Food Link of Tulare County, Happy Trails Riding Academy, Boy Scouts of America and the American Cancer Society.

Rosalinda Verde, the Creative Center's performing arts director, has "Writer's Block!"

Creative Center Players to Present 'Writer's Block!'

Staff Reports

The performing arts director at the Creative Center has writer's block. She can't come up with a script for the spring show and is stressing out. The Creative Center Players try to help her with ideas, but she is so preoccupied with her stress that she doesn't realize the great story they are giving her.

This is the premise of "Writer's Block!," the Creative Center Players' Spring Show, written by Rosalinda Verde, the center's performing arts director. Performances will be at the Jon Ginsberg Gallery, 410 E. Race Ave., Visalia.

Matinees start Monday, May 19, at 12:30pm, with additional matinees set for May 20 and 29. Evening performances will begin Wednesday, May 21, at 7pm, with additional evening shows May 22 and 28. Admission is $6.

For more information and reservations, call 733-9329.

Kings Players to Perform Neil Simon's 'Lost in Yonkers'

Staff Reports

The Kings Players will perform "Lost in Yonkers," written by Neil Simon and directed by Jennifer Toledo, at the Temple Theatre, 514 E. Visalia St., Hanford, on May 30 and 31, and June 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21 and 22. Friday and Saturday shows are at 7:30pm and Sunday matinees are at 2pm.

Top, l-r: "Bella" played by Cymone Sandoval, "Grandma" played by Debbie Walker. Bottom, l-r: "Arty" played by AJ Wolfert and lower Right "Jay" played by Zacary Wolfert

Set in Brooklyn in 1942, the play is about newly widowed Eddie Kurnitz, who needs to take a job as a traveling salesman to pay off his late wife's medical bills. This forces him to ask his stern mother if his two early-teen sons, Jay and Arty, can live with her and their childlike Aunt Bella in Yonkers.

The cast includes: Zac Wolfert (Jay Kurnitz), AJ Wolfert (Arty Kurnitz), Cymone Sandoval (Bell Kurnitz), Debbie Walker (Grandma Kurnitz), Sean Hopper (Louie Kurnitz), Devin Keith Alexander (Eddie Kurnitz) and Teresa Lynne Langdon (Gertrude Kurnitz). The assistant director is Kristeina DeGraaf Wolfert.

For reservations, call 584-7241.

"Black Holes: The Other Side of Infinity"

Peña Planetarium Offers Two Evening Shows on May 30

The Sam B. Peña Planetarium, operated by the Tulare County Office of Education, will offer visitors a choice of two shows on Friday, May 30.

At 7pm, the planetarium will show "Secret of the Cardboard Rocket," where the audience will climb aboard a magical cardboard rocket with two young adventurers and experience a breathtaking, up-close look at each of our Solar System's planets with guidance from their astronomy book.

The 8:15pm show will be "Black Holes: The Other Side of Infinity." Experience the creation of the Milky Way Galaxy, and witness the violent death of a star and subsequent birth of a black hole. Mathematical equations, cutting-edge science and Einstein's theories fill in holes along the way.

The planetarium is located at 2500 W. Burrel Ave. (in the Educational Enrichment Center) on the southwest corner of West Main Street and Woodland Drive in Visalia. Tickets are available at the planetarium office only between noon and 7pm on the day of the show. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children under 12. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Visitors may choose to see one or more shows listed on the daily schedules. However, each show requires the purchase of a separate ticket. No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close.

For show information, call 737-6334. For information about the Peña Planetarium, visit www.tcoe.org/planetarium.

Annual Visalia Color Vibe 5k Run to be Held May 17

Staff Reports

The Visalia Color Vibe 5k Run, which will be held at the Riverway Sports Park, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd., Visalia, on Saturday, May 17, is not your typical run. Participating runners will be blasted with a different color at each station throughout the run.

The $50 registration includes: entry into the 5K Color Vibe Run, an "Official Color Vibe" t-shirt, a Color Vibe color pack and a prize.

Color Vibe helps the local community, not only by bringing colorful happiness, but also by helping out a local charity. This year's charity partner is Pro-Youth / HEART, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing a safe, enriching and educational environment for children in the out-of-school hours through its after-school program.

To register or for more information, visit http://thecolorvibe.com/visalia.php.

Gary Allan Aims to 'Set You Free' at Tachi Palace

Staff Reports

Gary Allan's "Set You Free" tour will make a stop at Tachi Palace in Lemoore on Thursday, May 29, for a 7pm show.

Allan's tour is named after his newest album, which embodies his own evolution toward personal, creative freedom. The album, sequenced with a storyline in which a man breaks the restraints of a failed relationship and conquers the loneliness of its aftermath, is the result of his own journey as a man and as an artist.

Gary Allan

He took a number of new steps during the recording process – by mixing up the production team, playing lead guitar on a number of tracks, writing more of his own material and using a handful of new co-writers. As a result, he came up with the most optimistic album of his career, one that acknowledges the hurdles of the past and the ways in which they've helped to shape his current sense of renewal.

"It's all about healing," Allan said. "It's all about the evolution of getting better."

Allan is also good as new in a literal, physical way. *Set You Free* is the first album he recorded since the removal of a polyp on his vocal cords that had doggedly restricted his range, his strength and his expression. The issue was discovered almost by accident during a routine check-up with a Nashville voice doctor. But it explained why his concerts had ever so gradually become a test of his endurance.

"Every time I would go out before the surgery, I would only last full force for about three songs," he says. "I could feel the fatigue, and I could feel my cords swell up, and I had other people hitting notes for me. They removed the polyp, and it was like I was 18 again. It was amazing how well it worked."

The difference is noticeable. There's always been a gritty, gravelly edge to his performances, but confident that his voice will now respond, Allan pushes himself on *Set You Free* – both the album and his current tour – singing with more command, authority and pliability than he has in years.

Tickets for the 7pm show are $30, $40, $50, $60, $75 and $125, and are available at tachipalace.com.

The Mud Run is designed for all participants.

Annual Porterville Mud Run Set for June 7

Staff Reports

The Family Crisis Center has opened registration for its Mud Run to be held on Saturday, June 7, at the Porterville Sports Complex. The event annually welcomes teams, individuals, and youth registrants to join in participating in this fun and challenging course through many muddy obstacles.

The Mud Run is designed for all participants from the non-runner to the competitive athlete, with different runs happening during the day including a 5K, 1-Mile Family Fun, Youth Race Pollywog Jog (ages 12-17) and Mud Puddlers Jog (ages 7-11). There is also a complimentary "alligator-infested romp" for young children ages 3-7.

The event itself includes a variety of vendors, musical entertainment and a non-muddy kids' play area. KMPH newscaster Liz Gonzalez will serve as emcee of the Mud Run this year as she starts the races, motivates runners and announces the award winners. The National Guard is on board to guide and encourage runners through the route, military style of course. All activities happen 8am to noon.

Teams of family members, friends and co-workers are encouraged to register for this fun-filled event. Registrants receive swag bags of t-shirts and freebies provided by sponsors and others. To register online, visit www.ccfamilycrisis.org, or visit the Family Crisis Center, 770 N. Main St., Porterville, or the Porterville Chamber of Commerce, 93 N. Main St. The deadline to register (and be guaranteed a t-shirt) is May 19. Team registration is $175 for five people, individuals are $35, the Pollywog Jog is $20, and it's $10 for children in the Mud Puddlers Jog. For more information, call 781-7462.

Proceeds from the Porterville Mud Run benefit the many programs and services offered by the Central California Family Crisis Center in the Tulare County Area. Among its other services, the organization operates the women's shelter and transitional housing program for women and children in crisis.

Brenn Hill to Keep Tradition Alive at Mavericks

Staff Reports

The Western music genre is relying on Brenn Hill, and a few others, to keep the tradition of Western music going for those who know, love and appreciate it. This young Utah cowboy, a husband and father, travels around the West sharing the songs of the land that he has written about from first-hand experience, most of it on the back of a horse.

Brenn Hill

On Saturday, May 24, Hill will headline a 7pm show at Mavericks Coffee House in Visalia, showcasing the best of his ten recordings of mostly self-penned music, and bringing the experience of nearly two decades on the road. Hill has won numerous industry awards and accolades and resides with his wife, Sylina, and three children in Hooper, Utah.

For tickets ($25) or more information, call Mavericks at 624-1400, or stop by at 238 E. Caldwell Avenue, Visalia.

Cellar Door to Offer Baths on May 22

Aaron Gomes

Baths will headline a 9:30pm show at the Cellar Door in Downtown Visalia on Thursday, May 22.

Three years ago, Baths (Will Wiesenfeld) dropped his startlingly beautiful debut, *Cerulean*. Released on Anticon, the record blurred the line between post-modern pop and the L.A. beat scene with devastating emotional clarity. Its tone was as celestial as its album title, taken from a shade of blue typically used to describe the sky. *Cerulean* earned year-end "Best Of" recognition from *Pitchfork* and The Onion's A.V. Club and established Chatsworth-raised Wiesenfeld as one of the finest young composers (and falsettos) in Los Angeles.

Baths

His sophomore album, *Obsidian*, finds him emerging as one of the most complete artists of his generation. As you might expect, the name hints at darker overtones. The mood is shimmering and pitch-black, the lovely blood flow has turned into lava. *Obsidian* combines universal questions with personal pain. On just his second album, Baths exhibits what only a few artists are capable of: painting in any shade they desire.

Now, his new EP, *Ocean Death*, has just won *Pitchfork*'s "Best New Track" award. Baths' tour buzz is strong.

Edinburgh-based, hip-hop-meets-modern-electronics three-piece Young Fathers are set to play the middle slot. P. Morris kicks off the evening with a focus on dance-inducing beats.

The Cellar Door is located at 101 W. Main St., Visalia. Tickets are $13 in advance; $15 the night of show. For more information about this and other Sound N Vision concerts, visit snvfoundation.org.

Aaron Gomes is the founder and owner/operator of Sound N Vision Foundation, a nonprofit organization that brings indie bands to the area and sponsors local art events.

USAC Sprint Cars Return to Tulare for 'Faria Memorial'

Lance Jennings

On Saturday, May 17th, the USAC West Coast and Western Classic Sprint Cars will invade Tulare's Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway. The "Chris and Brian Faria Memorial" will also showcase the winged King of the West Sprint Cars and IMCA Modifieds. The spectator gates will open at 4pm, time trials at 6 pm, and racing is set for 7pm.

#3F Geoff Ensign. Photo by Steve Lafond / Tear-Off Heaven Fotos.

With valuable championship points up for grabs, the "Faria Memorial" will showcase the non-wing sprints of Central California (USAC West Coast) against the Northern California-based USAC Western Classic series. Markus Niemela of Rauma, Finland leads the West Coast standings and Sebastopol's "The Human Highlight Reel" Geoff Ensign leads the northern point chase.

Saturday's event will be the third of five USAC West Coast races at the Tulare County Fairgrounds. On March 14th, Dennis Howell of Rancho Palos Verdes earned his first main event win and rain cancelled the April 26th show. The May 17th "Faria Memorial" will be the only Tulare appearance for the USAC Western Classic Sprint Cars.

The USAC West Coast Sprints will return to Tulare on May 31st and June 21st. The non-wing sprints are also scheduled at Hanford's Kings Speedway on June 7th, July 19th and August 2nd.

Tulare's Merle Stone Chevrolet Thunderbowl Raceway is located at the Tulare County Fairgrounds at the corner of Bardsley and K Streets. Advance tickets are on sale and can be purchased by calling the track office at 688-0909.

For more event information, visit the track's website at www.tularethunderbowl.com. For more information on the USAC West Coast and Western Classic Series, visit www.usacracing.com or follow them on Facebook or Twitter.

NEXT DEADLINE:
29 MAY 2014

Join us for The Buena Vista Winery Dinner
Wednesday, May 28, 2014 • 6:30 pm
The Southern Pacific Depot Restaurant
Reservations • www.depotvisalia.com
207 East Oak Avenue, Visalia
(559) 732-8611

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Budweiser

MUSIC

May

May 15 – 3's A Crowd – 7-10pm
On Thursdays, 3's A Crowd performs at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E. Main St. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

May 15 – Elvis Live on Stage – 8pm
Cody Torres will perform an Elvis tribute concert on the 2nd Floor of Crawdaddy's Visalia, 333 E. Main St. For tickets to the dinner show call 682-6135.

May 16 – Sourdough Slim and his Saddle Pals – 7pm
Sourdough Slim will bring back his musical art and zany, deadpan humor to the Mavericks Coffee House. He will also be joined by the Saddle Pals. Tickets, $25, are available at Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia or by calling 624-1400.

May 16 – Zzah – 8-10pm
Zzah, a jazz group, will perform at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

May 17 – The Backroad Band – 8-10pm
The Backroad Band will perform at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

May 21 – Jugfest 2014 – 1pm
106-7 KJUG Country and Budweiser will present Jugfest 2014 at Plaza Park staring Justin Moore and featuring daytime acoustic shows with Collin Raye, Frankie Ballard, Jamie Lynn Spears and John King. The event is free. For details visit kjug.com/jugfest_2014.

May 23 – Brad Wilson at Blues, Brews & BBQ – 6-10pm
Budweiser will present this free concert at Garden Street Plaza in Downtown Visalia. Ice cold drinks and BBQ will be available for purchase.

May 23 – Isla View – 8-10pm
The pop-acoustic duo Isla View will perform at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

May 24 – Brenn Hill – 7pm
Mavericks Coffee House welcomes back Western Music star Brenn Hill. Hill's career spans two decades, ten recordings, and numerous industry awards. Tickets, $25, are available by calling 624-1400 or stop by Mavericks, 238 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia.

May 24 – Tim Mattos – 8-10pm
Country music performer Tim Mattos will be at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

May 29 – Gary Allan - Set You Free Tour – 7pm
Gary Allan will perform in the Outdoor Pavilion of Tachi Palace. Tickets $30-125, available at Tachipalace.com

May 30 – Springville Concerts in the Park – 7-9pm
Two Nice will perform. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and refreshments. For information, visit thecenterofspringville.com.

May 30 – Ronnie Nix – 8-10pm
Pop acoustic performer Ronnie Nix will be at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

May 31 – Christie Turpin – 8-10pm
Pop acoustic performer Christie Turpin will be at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.
June

June

June 6 – Electric Grease at Blues, Brews & BBQ – 6-10pm
Budweiser will present this free concert at Garden Street Plaza in Downtown Visalia. Ice cold drinks and BBQ will be available for purchase.

June 6 – Isla View – 8-10pm
The pop-acoustic duo Isla View will perform at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D St., Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

June 7 – Belinda Gail – 7pm
Belinda Gail will perform at Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For information, visit mavericks coffeehouse.com.

June 7 – Zzah – 8-10pm
The jazz group Zzah will perform at Farmer's Fury, 358 West D Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

June 12 – Sara Evans & Dustin Lynch – 7pm
Sara Evans with special guest Dustin Lynch will perform at Tachi Palace. Tickets ($25-$95) are available at tachipalace.com.

June 13 – Springville Concerts in the Park – 7-9pm
Stillwater will perform. Bring lawn chairs, blankets, and refreshments. For information, visit thecenterofspringville.com.

June 27 – Springville Concerts in the Park – 7-9pm
Patti Torrey and River Ridge Irregulars will perform. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and refreshments. For information, visit thecenterofspringville.com.

July

July 11 – Springville Concerts in the Park – 7-9pm
Lake Bottom will perform at the Springville Concerts in the Park. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and refreshments. For information, visit thecenterofspringville.com.

July 11 – Alabama - All American Tour – 7:30pm
Alabama will perform at Tachi Palace. Tickets, $40, $50, $60, $70, $85, $150, are available at tachipalace.com.

July 13 – Rodney Atkins – 7:30pm
Budweiser Concert Series and The Visalia Fox Theatre present Rodney Atkins. Tickets, $35-$75, are available at foxvisalia.org.

EVENTS

May

Through May 17 – Kings County Homecoming Week
A week-long series of events celebrating the pioneer spirit of those who first came to the San Joaquin Valley will include the Kick-off Dinner, Corcoran Western Family Night, Avenal "Dog Days" Homecoming, Hanford Market Place, Lemoore Downtown Homecoming Street Party and will conclude with the Annual Homecoming Parade and Festivities in the Park. For information, visit kingscountyhomecoming.org.

Through May 18 – Porterville Fair
The Porterville Fair, one of the last true community fairs in California, has been a cornerstone event in Southeastern Tulare County since 1948. For events, shows, and ticket information, visit portervillefair.com.

Through-Aug. 20 – Farmers Market at Quail Park – 10:30am-1:30pm
Quail Park Retirement Village will host a Farmers Market every Wednesday through August 20 at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. For information, call 624-3500.

Through Oct. 31 – Lemoore Friday Night Market – 5-9pm
Live music, beer garden, produce and other vendors are featured every Friday on D Street in Downtown Lemoore. For information, call 924-9040.

May 15, 22 & 29 – Thursday Farmer's Market – 5-8pm
Find the freshest produce Valley growers have to offer every Thursday night through October in downtown Visalia, corner of East Main and North Church Streets. For information, visit visaliafarmersmarket.com.

May 15 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Homecoming events will continue at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

May 16 – Stampede Fundraiser – 6pm
The Tulare-Kings Chapter of the California Women for Agriculture (CWA) is hosting its annual Stampede Fundraiser at the Historic Seven Sycamores Ranch in Ivanhoe. All proceeds support the local CWA chapter. A hosted wine and cheese social will begin at 6pm, followed by a barbecue dinner with special guest speaker Assemblywoman Connie Conway. Live entertainment by the Cadillac Cowboys will follow. Tickets are $40 per person and can be purchased by contacting Alyssa Houtby at 737-8899 or tularekingscwa@gmailcom. Tables of 8 are available for $320.

May 16 – Once Upon A Dream – 6:30-11pm
Casa of Tulare County's 20th Annual Once Upon a Dream will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. The fundraiser includes dinner, live auctions, vehicle raffle and dancing to Borrowed Time. Tickets, $150. For information, visit casatulareco.org.

May 16 – Senior Day in the Park – 9am-2pm
The Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging is sponsoring Senior Day in the Park at Mooney Grove to honor the seniors in the community. The event features live music, food, games, dancing, exhibitor booths, free raffle and live entertainment including the Polynesian Dancers, and an Elvis impersonator. For information, call (800) 321-2462 or visit www.ktaaa.org.

May 17 – Color Vibe 5K Run - Pro-Youth/HEART – 7-11am
Color Vibe 5K Run and Color Dance Party will be held at Riverway Sports Park, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd., Visalia. Runners are blasted with color along the route and will support ProYouth/Heart. Register, $50, at thecolorvibe.com.

May 17 – Hanford Homecoming Parade and Fair – 10am-4pm
Hanford Chamber of Commerce will host the Homecoming Parade and Fair at Hanford Civic Auditorium Park. Food, kids activities and vendors will be featured. For information, visit hanfordchamber.com.

May 17 – 3rd Annual Downtown Expo – 5-11pm
This event will include professional chef demonstrations; a fashion show showcasing Chelsea Street Boutique, Sugar Plums, Essentials and Annabelle's Bridal; classic cars and hot rods from the 25th Annual Breakfast Lions Car Club Show; demonstrations from downtown merchants; and a live performance by Run 4 Cover – and dancing. For more information, call 732-7737.

May 17 – 5th Annual REZ MADE Car Show – 10am
The 5th Annual Tachi Rez-Made Car Show featuring War and Rose Royce will be held at Tachi Palace. To enter vehicles, visit rezmadecarclub.com. Tickets for the event are $25 and on sale at tachipalace.com.

May 17, 24 & 31 – Berry Blast at Visalia Farmer's Market – 8-11:30am
Berries are in season at the Visalia Farmer's Market. Open year around, the market, corner of S. Mooney and W. Caldwell, offers fresh local produce, cooking demonstrations and entertainment. For information, visit visaliafarmersmarket.com.

May 17-18 – Exeter's 5th Annual Relay for Life
Exeter Relay for Life will be held at EUHS Stadium. The event begins at 9am and ends at 9am on Sunday. A survivors breakfast will be held at 8am. There will also be games for the kids and food.

May 17 – Family HealthCare Health And Safety Fair – 11-1pm
Family HealthCare will offer free health screenings immediately following the Hanford Homecoming Parade. A raffle will also be held at the event at Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St. For information, call 909-2130.

VENT CALENDAR

May 17 – An Evening at the Derby – 6pm
Assistance League Visalia will host a fundraiser featuring quasi horse races, silent auction, and dinner catered by Tres Bien in the garden of Dr. and Mrs. Donald Schengel, 2205 Hyde Way, Visalia. For information, call 737.1090 or visit visalia.assistanceleague.org.

May 17 – Experts Speak Out – 6pm
A free viewing of the video "Experts Speak Out" on 911 and a Skype discussion with Dan Noel, engineer and member of ae911truth will be held at 1217 South Fairway Street, Visalia. Bring your favorite dish for the potluck. To reserve a spot and for information, call 901-1974.

May 17 – USAC Western Classic Sprint Car Series
The Chris & Brian Faria Memorial Sprint Car Racing will feature King of the West 410 Sprint Cars, USAC 360 Non-Wing Spring Cars and IMCA Modifieds competitions. The event will be held at the Thunderbowl Raceway, Tulare Fairgrounds, Bardsley and K Streets. For tickets, call 688-0909. For information, visit thunderbowlraceway.com.

May 18 – Tulare Historical Museum Sunday@2 – 2pm
The Tulare Historical Museum's Sunday@2 program will feature a book presentation and signing by Honore Hillman and Sesar Carreno. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

May 20 & 27 – Tulare Farmer's Market – 5-8pm
Produce, demonstrations and live entertainment are featured at the Tulare Farmer's Market in the Tulare Outlets. For information, visit Visaliafarmersmarket.com.

May 21 – Enterprise Zone – 4-5pm
A free workshop on state tax incentives available to businesses will be held at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce. The enterprise zone program was created by the state of California to stimulate business investment in economically distressed areas. RSVP by calling 688-3388.

May 22 – Workplace Violence Prevention Training – 8:30-10am
Cal Bennett's and Fresno Pacific University are sponsoring a free training session and breakfast at the Visalia Center, Fresno Pacific University, 245 N. Plaza Dr. in Visalia. To make a reservation, call 622-8889.

May 22 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Glen Delpit and the Subterraneans will be the featured entertainment at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. The theme for the evening will be Baseball Fever Night. Classic Cars will also be on display. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

May 23 – Lunch 'n' Learn – 12-1:30pm
The Professional Latin American Association will hold a presentation on "Coaching for Peak Performance" as part of its Lunch 'n' Learn Leadership Development Series. The event is held at the KCAO Main Office, 1130 N. 11th Ave., Hanford. To reserve a seat, email plaakings@yahoo.com or call Carol Hernandez at 482-7515.

May 24 – Valdivia Grande Balle – 7pm-1am
An evening of music and dancing will feature Valdivia, Ramon Ayala and many more at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets, $48.95, are available at visaliatix.showare.com.

May 26 – Farmersville's 60th Diamond Anniversary Memorial Day Parade – 10am
The Kiwanis Club of Farmersville, with the support of the City of Farmersville and members of the community, will be sponsor Tulare County's only Memorial Day Parade. For information, call 731-9774.

May 27 – Business After Hours – 5:30-7:30pm
The Visalia Chamber Business After Hours program will be held at Miller Memorial Chapel, 1120 W. Goshen Ave. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

May 29 – Gary Allan Set You Free Tour
Gary Allen will perform at Tachi Palace in Lemoore. Tickets–$30, $40, $50, $60, $75, $125–are available at tachipalace.com.

May 29 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Roadhouse will be the featured entertainment at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. The theme for the evening will be Art in the Park. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

May 31 – Rummage for the Arts – 7-11am
The Kings Art Center will gladly take your gently used items and make sure they are sold to benefit the arts. Bring your items prior to the event to the Kings Art Center, 605 N. Douty St., Hanford, during business hours. Donations are tax deductible. For information call 584-1065.

May 31 – AgVenture Day – 9:30am-1:30pm
International Agri-Center's AgVentures Learning Center, the Tulare County Farm Bureau and UC Cooperative Extension are partnering to present this education enrichment program for 4th graders from Tulare and Visalia city schools to explore farming, food and fun. The event will be held at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. For details, call 732-8301 or email ccrane@tulcofb.org.

June

June 3 - California Primary Election
State and local elections will be held. Remember to vote early and often.

June 5 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Mehrten Drive will be the featured entertainment at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. The theme for the evening will be Dairy Appreciation Night. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

June 7 – Annual Porterville Mud Run – 8am-12pm
The Family Crisis Center will hold its Mud Run at the Porterville Sports Complex. The event annually welcomes teams, individuals and youth to participate in a fun and challenging course through many muddy obstacles. The Mud Run is designed for all participants from the non-runner to the competitive athlete. Runs include a 5K, 1 Mile Family Fun, Youth Race Pollywog Jog (ages 12-17), and Mud Puddlers Jog (ages 7-11). There is also a complimentary "alligator infested romp" for young children ages 3-7. The event also includes a variety of vendors, musical entertainment, and a non-muddy kids' play area. For information, call 781-7462.

June 7 – TCHS Park Tour – 8am-5pm
Tulare County Historical Society will host a tour of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Park. Early Tulare County pioneers had the vision to preserve the Giant Sequoias and landscapes. The tour will include a walk through the natural and cultural history of the park. Cost, $40, includes full-sized motor coach, tour and box lunch. For information, call 212-1162 or 626-4988.

June 7 – Woodlake Berry Tasting – 10am-2pm
Blueberries, blackberries and strawberries will be the highlights of Woodlake Berry Tasting at Bravo Lake Botanical Gardens, 200 E. Naranjo Blvd., Woodlake.

June 12 – Ribbon Cutting at Quad Knopf – 3:30-4pm
Visalia Chamber of Commerce will hold a ribbon-cutting at Quad Knopf, 901 E. Main St. RSVP at visaliachamber.org.

June 14 – Kings Lions Brewfest 2014 – 5-9pm
Kings Lions will host its Brewfest at 19th Avenue Park, Lemoore. Beer tasting, food and live performances are featured. Proceeds benefit local charities. For information, visit facebook.com/KingsBrewfest.

June 19 – Pacific Employers Safety Programs Seminar – 10-11:30am
Pacific Employers and the Tulare-Kings Builders Exchange will host a seminar at the Builders Exchange at 1223 S. Lovers Lane in Visalia. RSVP to Pacific Employers at 733-4256. The mid-morning seminars include refreshments and handouts. For information, visit pacificemployers.com.

June 19 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Square One will be the featured entertainment at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. The theme for the evening will be Beach Party, featuring Hawaiian shirts and a dune buggy car show. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

June 19 – Visalia Chamber of Commerce 61st Annual Awards Banquet
Each year, the Visalia Chamber honors businesses and individuals who consistently go above and beyond to support the community. The banquet will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

June 19 – Throwback Thursday – 6pm
Tachi Palace Fights present Throwback Thursday TPF 19. Tickets available at tachipalace.com.

June 20-August 29 – Rockin' the Arbor – 6-10pm
On Friday nights, Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will present Rockin' the Arbor, featuring live music, food vendors and family activities at 300 E Street. For information, call 924-6401.

June 21-22 – Rocky Mountain Gun Show - 9am
Rocky Mountain Gun Show will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Admission is $10; children 12 & under, free. On Saturday the event ends at 5pm, and Sunday at 4pm. For information, visit rockymountaingunshow.com.

June 21 – 2014 Brewfest
A Brewfest at Kings Fairgrounds, 801 W. 10th Ave., Hanford, will feature live music food and a selection of beers. Tickets, $45, include briefest t-shirt and barbecue plate. Tickets are available at ralphbpresents.com.

June 25 – Lunch 'n' Learn – 12-1:30pm
The Professional Latin American Association will hold a presentation on "Retaining Talent" as part of its Lunch 'n' Learn Leadership Development Series. The event is held at the KCAO Main Office, 1130 N. 11th Ave., Hanford. Attendees will receive a certificate of completion from the office of Assemblyman Rudy Salas and the Professional Latin American Association. To reserve a seat, email plaakings@yahoo.com or call Carol Hernandez at 482-7515.

June 26 – Main Street Hanford Thursday Night Market Place – 5:30-9pm
Midnight Wine will be the featured entertainment at the Thursday Night Market Place in downtown Hanford. The theme for the evening will be Health and Wellness. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

June 27 – Independence Day Celebration Golf Tournament – 8am
Lemoore American Legion Post 100 will hold a golf tournament featuring a 4-person scramble. For information and registration, call 707-4840.

July

July 3 – Thursday Night Market Place - Red, White & Blues Night – 5:30-9pm
Red, White and Blues will be the Hanford Thursday Night Market Place theme. Electric Grease (blues/West Coast jump) will be the featured entertainment. Fresh produce, beer garden, live band, D.J., local vendors, kids activities and theme nights are featured every Thursday night through September in downtown Hanford. For information, visit mainstreethanford.com.

July 3 – Woodlake July 3rd Blast – 5-10pm
The celebration will be held at Miller Brown Park in downtown Woodlake. Vendors, kids games, bounce houses, music and events will be featured. The evening ends with a fireworks display. For information visit woodlakekiwanis.com

July 4 – Freedom Celebration – 7pm
The Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation will host this event inside Giant Chevrolet Cadillac Mineral King Stadium, 1001 W. Main St. The event is free, but a donation of $3 is requested. For information, call Carol Hoppert Hays 713-4599.

July 4 – Fourth of July in the Park – 7am-3pm
Exeter will celebrate "4th of July in the Park" at Exeter City Park. For information, call 592-2919. Arts & crafts and food booth spaces are available. Events feature live entertainment, 10k run and 2-mile walk, and a fireworks display presented by the Lion's Club at Lions Stadium.

July 4 – Firework Celebration – 5pm
Tachi Palace in Lemoore will host a free firework celebration, mini-carnival, bounce house and live music in the outdoor pavilion. Lawn chairs and coolers are allowed, but no glass bottles or alcohol will be permitted. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

July 9-12 - 46th MARAC National Convention
The Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club will hold its national convention at the Visalia Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center. For information, visit marac.org.
July 10 – Lunch 'n' Learn – 12-1:30pm
The Professional Latin American Association will hold a presentation on "Leading High Performance Teams" as part of its Lunch 'n' Learn Leadership Development Series. The event is held at the KCAO Main Office, 1130 N. 11th Ave., Hanford. To reserve a seat, call Carol Hernandez at 482-7515.

COMMUNITY

May

May 15 – St. Mary Armenian Church Food Festival
St. Mary Armenia Church of Yettem will host its 37th Armenia Food Festival at the Visalia Elks Lodge, 3100 W. Main. The festival was changed its location to provide a drive-through option and increase event parking. Lunch, featuring traditional Armenian foods, will be served from 11am-2pm and dinner from 5-8pm. For information, visit st.maryyettem.org.

May 16 – First Heritage Association Scholarship
Porterville Fair Heritage Association will present the first Heritage Scholarship as the Junior Livestock Sale at the Porterville Fairgrounds. The Heritage Animal auction proceeds go toward youth related programs, exhibits and future projects at the Porterville Fairgrounds.

May 16 – Computer Basics 1 – 8:30am
The Tulare Public Library will offer a class in computer basics. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

May 16 – United Way of Tulare County Mixer – 5-6:30pm
United Way of Tulare County and local chambers will hold a Business After Hours Mixer at 1601 E. Prosperity Ave., Tulare. Meet their new staff and enjoy food, drinks and door prizes. For information, call 685-1766.

May 17 – EUHS Blood Drive – 8am-12pm
Central California Blood Center and the Exeter High School will host a blood drive. A bloodmobile will be on site at EUHS. Donors will receive a T-shirt and a voucher for a free regular size A&W root beer float, plus a variety of discounts from Valley businesses for dining, recreation, entertainment and services. For information, call Jason Welch at 592-2127.

May 17 – SpecTRACKular & Fitness Expo – 10am–2pm
The City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department and Leadership Visalia Class of 2013–2014 will hold a SpecTRACKular & Fitness Expo at College of the Sequoias Track, corner of S. Woodland and W. Meadow Ave., Visalia. The fee event, geared to reach youth before they break for summer, features the Hershey's Track & Field Games, a health and wellness fair, music, entertainment and more. For inquiries, call 636-5366.

May 17 – Armed Forces Tribute – 1-4pm
Lemon Cove Women's Club will host a fundraiser at 32792 Sierra Dr. (Hwy. 198). Donations of $10 will go toward repair and maintenance of the historic Pogue Hotel. The event will feature a tribute to the armed forces, an open house of the History Museum, and dessert. For information, call 359-4465.

May 17 – Hallelujah Hoedown – 4-6:30pm
Lemoore United Methodist Church will hold a Hoedown featuring live music, pulled pork or hot dog meal, auction, bounce house, gift basket drawings, games and a country store stocked with homemade crafts and foods. Meal tickets are $10, pulled-pork, and $5, hot dogs. For tickets, call 924-5295 or stop by the church office, 500 E. Bush St., Lemoore.

May 20 – League of Women Voters Annual Meeting – 11:30am
The League of Women Voters will meet in Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center, Visalia. The Annual Meeting will feature a special menu using only locally grown ingredients. The public is welcome. The speaker will be Visalia City Councilman Greg Collins, who will discuss future plans for the area. A fixed price luncheon for $18, including tax and tip, will be served. Reservations are requested by May 16 by calling 734-6501.

May 21 – Spanish Computer Class – 9am
The Tulare Public Library will offer a class on an introduction to the internet in Spanish. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

May 21 – Wellness & You – 5:30-6:30 pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts a free seminar at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, 4945 W. Cypress Ave. Speaker: David Surdyka, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon. Information: 624-5985.

May 22 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

May 23 – Computer Basics 2 – 8:30am
The Tulare Public Library will offer a class on computer basics. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

May 28 – Senior Health & Fitness Day – 8:30-11:30 am
Lemoore Recreation Center will host a 2014 National Senior Health & Fitness Day event featuring Zumba demonstration, line dancing, chair exercising, vendors and brunch. For information, call 924-6767.

May 29 – The Last Thursday Book Club – 6pm
"The Art Forger" by B. A. Shapiro will be discussed at the Tulare Public Library. To register for book clubs, call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

May 30 - Mental Health Awareness Night at the Rawhide Baseball Park – 7 pm
The Tulare County Department of Mental Health will collaborate with the Visalia Rawhide baseball organization to host Mental Health Awareness Night. The Rawhide team will be wearing turquoise-colored jerseys in honor of the campaign; and the first 500 through the gate will receive a complimentary t-shirt. For information, visit tularehhsa.org.

May 31 – Sci/Fi Book Club – 1pm
The Sci Fi Book Club meets the last Friday of every month at the Tulare Public Library. To register for book clubs call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

June 1 – MBA Summer Season Begins – 12pm
McDermont Field House MBA Summer Season will kick off its season with an evening of intense basketball games and team and family events. For information, visit medermontfieldhouse.com.

KIDS

May

May 15, 22 & 29 – Bilingual Story Time – 1:15pm
Every Thursday, Tulare Public Library hosts a bilingual family story time in the Kids' Space. For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

May 16, 23 & 30 – Preschool Story-time – 11:15am
Every Friday, Preschool Story-time is held at Tulare Public Library in the Kids' Space. For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

May 16 & 17 – The Adventures of Peter Cottontail – 7pm.
The Enchanted Playhouse Theatre presents "The Adventures of Peter Cottontail" at 307 E. Main, Visalia. Tickets, $8, available at enchanted playhouse.org.

May 20 & 27 – Kindergarten Readiness Storytime – 6:15pm
Every Tuesday, the Tulare Public Library hosts story time in the Kids' Space.

May 27 – Teen Game Night – 5pm
Teen Game Night for ages 13-19 is held on the last Tuesday of each month in the Charter Room of the Tulare Public Library.

May 30 – Family Game Night – 5pm
Family Game Night is the last Friday of each month at the Tulare Public Library.

May 31 - Toddler Time – 10 am
Tulare Public Library will host Toddler Time in the Olympic Room on the last Saturday of each month. Parents are encouraged to bring children aged 18-36 months.

June

June 2-5 – Porterville College SMART Lab
Registration is open for Porterville College Foundation's S.M.A.R.T. Lab (Science, Mathematics and Resource Technology) program for grades 4-6. Multiple 3-day sessions are offered this summer: June 2-5

ART

May

Through May 16 – Awakening Exhibit – 5:30-8:30pm
"Awakening Exhibit" at Provost & Pritchard, 130 N. Garden St., Visalia, features artwork by Betty Berk, Toni Best, Jeri Burzin, Laurie Gorman, Linda Hengst, Deborah Nolan, Deanna Saldana and Lynn Ramires.

Through May 17 – Kings Art Center Annual Spring Show
An annual open entry exhibit hosted by the Kings County Art League and the Kings Art Center features more than 60 works of art from the community. The display is in the Marcellus Gallery. Gallery hours are Wednesday Through Friday from 11am to 4pm and weekends from noon to 3pm. For information, visit kingsartcenter.org.

Through May 17 – Celebrate Pastels
Recent works by LaVone Stering, an award winning pastel artists from Visalia are on display at the Members Gallery at the Kings Art Center in Hanford. The works exhibited are landscapes and portraits. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday from 11am to 4pm, and weekends from noon to 3pm. For information, visit kingsartcenter.org.

Through May 31 – Tulare Annual Spring Art Show
The Tulare Palette Club's Annual Spring Art Show is now in the Tulare Historical Museum's Art Gallery. Dozens of artists will display their works in a variety of media including oil, acrylic, encaustic, watercolor, pastel, mixed media, pen, pencil and computer-generated art. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Through June 30 – A Box of Chocolates
This Exeter Courthouse Gallery and Museum spring art exhibit brings together the work of George Tanimoto and Jerry Smith. The Courthouse Gallery is located at 125 South B Street.

Through-May 31 – Expressions of Lived Experience Art Show – 5:30-8pm
The Arts Consortium My Voice Media Center, in collaboration with the Tulare County Department of Mental Health, will host an art reception to kick-off a month-long art exhibition displaying pieces of artwork from individuals with lived experience which depict expressions of lived experience. The art exhibition will be on display throughout May at the Arts Consortium, 400 N. Church St., Visalia. For information, visit tularehhsa.org.

May 16-18 – Open Air Peddler's Market
The market featuring antiques and collectibles is held at Tumbleweeds Antiques, 159 North B Street, Exeter, and at Exeter Treasures, 558 E. Palm. To reserve space or for information, call 592-1940 or 936-1487.

May 16 – Tulare Palette Club Meeting – 7-9pm
A potluck will be held at the Heritage Art Gallery. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

June 5 – Earth and Rock Exhibit Artist Reception – 5-7pm
Tulare Historical Museum will host an artist's reception for the Earth & Rock exhibit in the Heritage Art Gallery. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

June 6-July 27 – Yosemite Renaissance XXVIII
The Kings Art Center Marcellus Gallery will hold an Opening Reception June 6 from 5:30-7:30pm. For information visit kingsartcenter.org.

June 7 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
Open art studios and art vendors are featured on the first Saturday each month. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

See more events online
ourvalleyvoice.com

THEATER

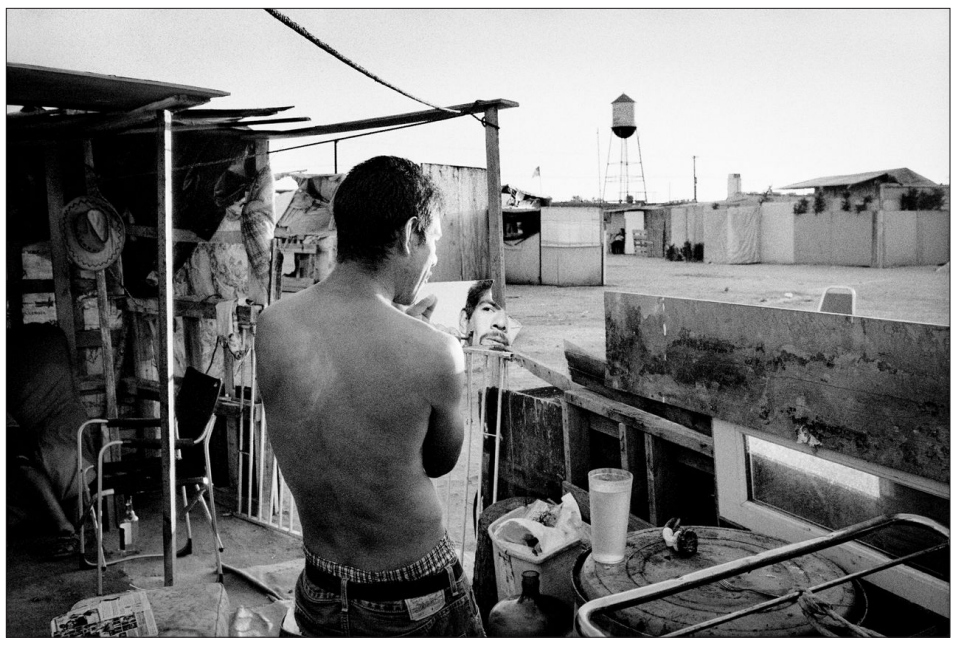
May

May 16-18 – Nobody's Perfect
Encore Theatre Company presents "Nobody's Perfect" at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit tulareencoretheatre.org or call 686-1300.

May 16-18 and 23-25 – Last of the Boys
The Visalia Players will present "Last of the Boys" for three weekends at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on May 16, 17, 23 and 24, and matinees are at 2pm on May 18 and 25. Note: The show contains adult language and the sounds of war. To purchase tickets, visit www.visaliaplayers.org or "Visalia Community Players" on Facebook, or call 734-3900.

May 15 – Cutie and The Boxer – 7:30pm
Stella Artois Independent Film Series and the Visalia Fox Theatre present "Cutie and the Boxer." Tickets, $6-$8, are available at the box office or foxvisalia.com.

May 16 & 17 – The Adventures of Peter Cottontail – 7pm
The Enchanted Playhouse Theatre presents "The Adventures of Peter Cottontail" at 307 E. Main, Visalia. Tickets, $8, available at



The photographs of Matt Black of Exeter will be featured at a Central Valley photography exhibition at San Francisco City Hall.

Local Artist to be Featured in San Francisco Photography Exhibition

Staff Reports

The San Francisco Arts Commission Galleries will present "The Valley/El Valle: Photo-essays from California's Heartland," an exhibition at San Francisco City Hall from June 17 to September 19, featuring the work of photographers from throughout the Central Valley, including Matt Black of Exeter.

Black's work, which has explored life in the Central Valley and in southern Mexico, has been honored by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, the Alexia Foundation for World Peace, the World Press Photo Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, the Documentary Project Fund, the Center for Photographic Projects, Pictures of the Year International, and others. He is represented by Anastasia Photo, a gallery of contemporary documentary photography In New York.

"The Central Valley has been my subject for many years, but it's been my home for longer," said Black. "Like the best of all enigmas, the Valley presents a plain face to the outside world, but the deeper you go, the closer you get to its heart, the more complex the reality becomes.

"My relationship to the Valley, torn between a deep love and at times and even deeper frustration, is a reflection of this complexity, and my work as a photographer was born out of this complex mix of feelings and obligations," he added. "Lacking any other clear answer, I chose to become a chronicler of my place, attempting to unravel these contradictions, bit by bit."

For more information, visit www.mattblack.com.

Summer Strings Program Returns to Porterville College

Staff Reports

Porterville College has announced that it will host the 2014 Porterville Summer Strings (PSS) program for students, 4th through 12th grades June 1-6.

The Porterville Summer Strings Workshop is a collaborative effort between the local branch of the American Association of University Women, student faculty from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Porterville College Music Department, the Porterville Unified School District, and local musicians and supporters who have generously given their time, talents and resources. The idea for the program began in summer of 2008 in Porterville, where a former townie brought home a vision for its music students.

The purpose is to provide a high quality, inexpensive five-day musical workshop for violin, viola, cello and bass players. This opportunity is again sponsored by Porterville American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Porterville College, with instruments available from Porterville Unified School District. It is the intention of this workshop to provide extraordinary experiences for all willing and qualified students. The week will include musical technique, small group lessons, same instrument ensembles, piano theory and several recitals.

The student's cost for the workshop is $35 if enrolled by May 19. From May 20-27, the cost is $40. After May 27, registration will be accepted on a limited basis and will cost $50. Registration forms are available online on the Porterville Summer Strings website.

For more information, visit www.pstringscamp.com.

Visalia SpecTRACKular Event on May 17th Invites Young Participants

Staff Reports

The City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department and Leadership Visalia Class of 2013-2014 will bring the Visalia SpecTRACKular & Fitness Expo to College of the Sequoias track on Saturday, May 17.

The first event of its kind geared to reach youth before they break for summer, the Visalia SpecTRACKular & Fitness Expo features the Hershey's Track & Field Games, a health and wellness fair, music, entertainment and more.

Completely free for participants, the Visalia SpecTRACKular invites local youth ages four to 14 years of to enjoy learning, participation and the enjoyment of physical activity as they participate in the Hershey's Track & Field Games. Participants can pick from various races like sprints and long distances, as well as competing in the standing long jump and a softball throw.

Featuring a corresponding fitness expo, guests of all ages are encouraged to learn from hand-picked vendors about healthy cooking, local summer programs for youth and the fun of staying fit. Full of activities and opportunities, the Visalia SpecTRACKular and Fitness Expo encourages kids, and their families, to be active and healthy all summer long.

In addition to the vendors and music, there will be fitness and dance demonstrations, as well as tastings from local sponsors Rosa Brothers Milk Company and Port of Subs.

The event will run from 10am to 2pm at the College of the Sequoias Track, corner of South Woodland and West Meadow Ave. in Visalia

For more information on the Visalia SpecTRACKular, call the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department at 713-4365, or visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com and scroll to "Upcoming Events."

Event to Honor Senior Citizens and Their Contributions to Tulare County

Staff Reports

The Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (K/T AAA) is celebrating the vitality and aspirations of older adults, as well as their contributions to our communities, on Friday, May 16 by sponsoring "Senior Day in the Park." May is National Older Americans Month and K/T AAA has held this celebration for last 45 years at Mooney Grove Park to honor the seniors in our community.

The 45th Annual Senior Day in the Park will feature live music, food and live entertainment, including the Polynesian Dancers, an Elvis impersonator, games, dancing, exhibitor booths and a free raffle.

The event will run 9am to 2pm at Mooney Grove Park, 2700 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. For more information call (800) 321-2462 or visit www.ktaaa.org.

'Concert in the Park' Series to Feature AC Myles

AC Myles

Staff Reports

The City of Tulare Parks and Recreation Department will present rock and blues performer AC Myles (pictured at left) at the John Philip Sousa Pavilion at Zumwalt Park in Tulare from 7:30-9pm on Wednesday, May 28, as part of its 2014 "Concert in the Park" Series.

June performers include Richie Blue, the Tulare Community Band, and August.

For more information, call 684-4310 or visit the Tulare Parks and Community Services website at http://www.tulareparksandrec.com/community/adultservices.htm

JugFest

Continued from p. 17

"We are so excited to be able to bring JugFest back to Visalia at Plaza Park for the first time in five years," said Bill Lynch, general manager. "This venue has allowed us to deliver an unprecedented level of country music talent to the Central Valley."

There will be numerous vendors selling food, drink, and artist memorabilia. Patrons must bring a state-issued photo ID to be admitted into bar service areas.

Admittance is free. General parking is $5 and premium parking is available for $25. KJUG is also offering free shuttles from Downtown Visalia to Plaza Park during the day.

Concertgoers are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit and enjoy the event. Plaza Park is located at 700 S. Plaza St. in Visalia. Gates open at 1pm and the show starts at 3pm.

KJUG 106.7 FM is a country format radio station serving the Fresno-Visalia-Tulare area. For more information, visit www.KJUG.com.

Art/Health

Continued from p. 17

uses the media arts as a vehicle to promote awareness and understanding of issues students, their friends and families may face. Students begin the program with training designed to teach basic knowledge about mental health issues. They then conduct research on their chosen mental health topic before working on their art projects. Art projects can range from drawings, paintings or photography to theater productions and video public service announcements. The course culminates with a public growth workshop conducted by an expert in the field of mental health, followed by a public exhibition of artworks and community resources available to reduce the stigma of mental illness, stereotyping and discriminatory thinking.

Students in Woodlake art teacher Deanna Bowers' class have chosen to develop artworks around the issues of depression, suicide and other harmful behaviors. Ms. Bowers said that because of RESTATE, students have told her that they are more comfortable talking about mental health issues and that when they do, people are supportive listeners. "I believe that the course has been very valuable and that students will realize this later in life," she said.

The work of Ms. Bowers' students and other Tulare and Kings county classes will be exhibited May 17 at the RESTATE Spring Showcase in Visalia. The event will be held in conjunction with the Slick Rock Student Film Festival from 4:30 to 6:30pm Saturday, May 17, outside the Visalia Fox Theatre on Encina Street. Students will facilitate conversations about their artwork and how it ties to mental health awareness. RESTATE is funded through the Tulare-Kings Suicide Prevention Task Force as part of Proposition 63 funds.

Attending the presentations were (l-r): Caroline Koontz, Arts Consortium executive director; Bachrun and Mahalia LoMele, The Hatchery; Sandra Flores, Fresno Regional Foundation senior program officer; Rosalinda Verde, Visalia Opera Company; and Dan DeSantis, CEO Fresno Regional Foundation. Photo by Donna Orozco

Three Tulare County Arts Groups Receive Grants

Staff Reports

Three Tulare County arts groups have received grants from the Fresno Regional Foundation for 2014. The foundation awarded $10,000 to the Visalia Opera Company, $10,000 to the Urbanist Collective, and $8,500 for a street-roving Hide Out mini-gallery. The opera company and urbanists are both projects of the Arts Consortium, the local arts agency for the City of Visalia and Tulare County, and a state-local partner of the California Arts Council.

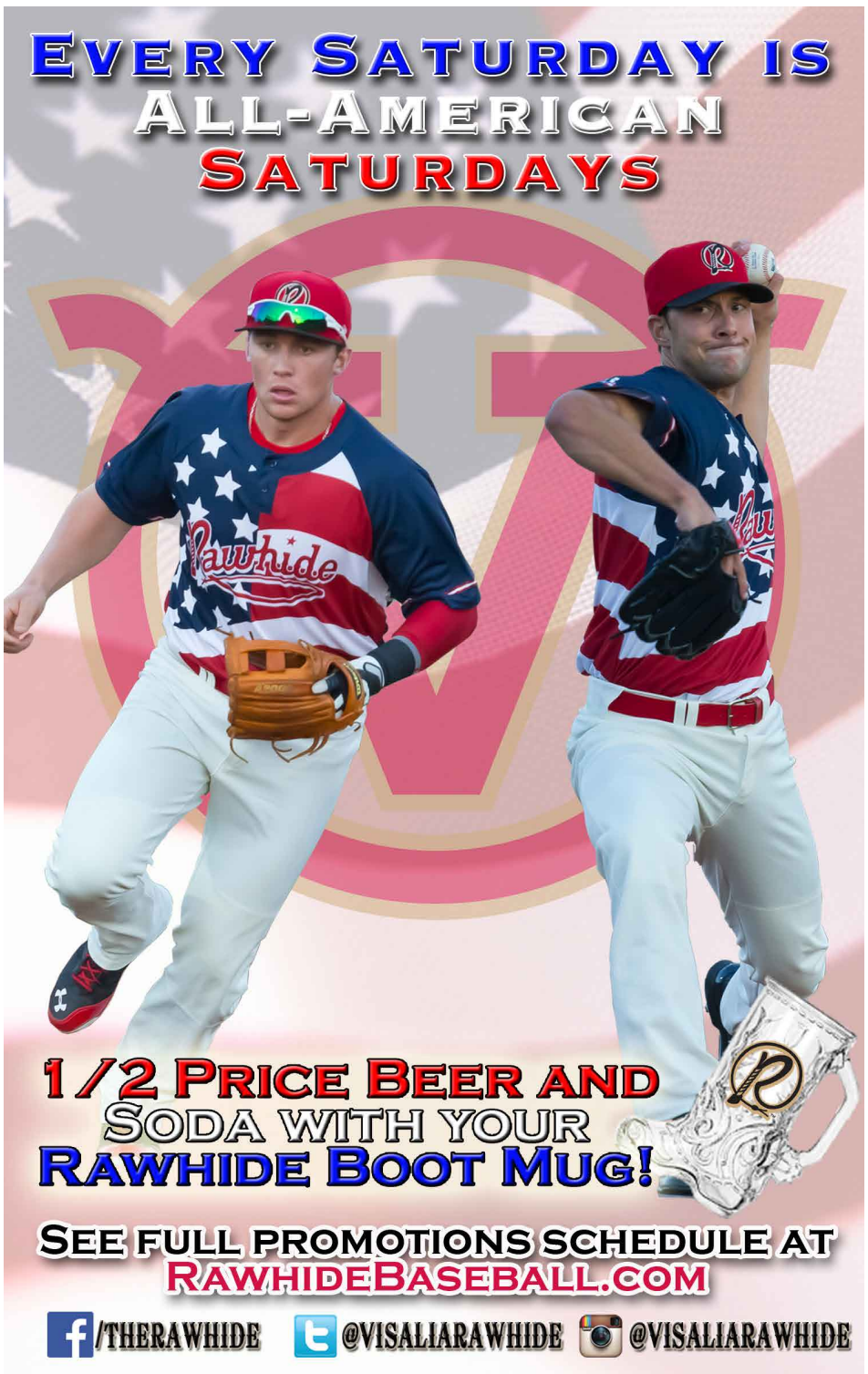
The Fresno Regional Foundation made $214,000 available to organizations seeking to enhance the art and cultural experience in the San Joaquin Valley. Recipients had to support culturally relevant arts forms that reflect and serve the Central Valley's diverse population in unique venues, especially among underserved communities.

The Visalia Opera Company will partner with the UCLA mariachi group to compose and present a mariachi opera to three diverse populations: mental health clients, the Visalia Rescue Mission and the Oval Neighborhood Park. The original opera will be written by Rosalinda Verde, founder of the opera company, and the UCLA mariachi group. The project will use mariachi music to expose low income and non-traditional audiences to classical music.

The Urbanists Collective uses graffiti art to engage youth in creative activities in appropriate venues to encourage future careers and positive lifestyles. Their grant will identify high-risk students and provide them with a way to create non-violent self-expression in four rural communities. Many young people feel invisible, but through mural art the Urbanists hope to make a difference in how they view themselves and their forms of expression.

Each community will create a large mobile panel. The four panels will be put together and unveiled at the Old Lumberyard in Downtown Visalia during a First Friday art walk. The project will be overseen by Erik Gonzalez, founder of the Urbanists.

The Hide Out project was created by Bachrun LoMele, who coordinates The Hatchery in the foothills of Badger, which offers art spaces and art shows. The Hide Out project will be an interactive booth where people are invited to speak their secrets and untold stories. No one will be listening. Software will scramble the information into confused sentences and sounds which will be distributed as a live-feed type stream to artists around the country and also shown on flashing LED signs on the booth.

Voices will be distorted and then used by sound artists or composers. The "music" will be broadcast from the exterior of the booth. The booth is a metaphor for an artist's experience and is a way for the public to participate in the process.

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